RETURN FROM EXILE: BRINGING AWARENESS OF CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE AND RECOVERY TO CLERGY AND CHURCH LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

RETURN FROM EXILE: BRINGING AWARENESS OF CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE AND RECOVERY TO CLERGY AND CHURCH LEADERSHIP

by
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United Theological Seminary, 2017

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Lady Lake United Methodist Church congregants and other community members participated in this project. The purpose of this study was to bring awareness of childhood sexual abuse to the church and to facilitate spiritual healing of the victim. The hypothesis was that educational workshops, small groups, and counseling would lead victims towards spiritual wholeness. Implications of these therapies would be that participants recognize God's grace and forgiveness, deal with guilt and shame, and be able to worship God freely in spirit and in truth.. The results were measured by using a mixed method analysis and demonstrated some effectiveness from counseling.

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I thank God for the opportunity to enter this phase of my life as a student in pursuit of the Doctor of Ministry degree at United Theological Seminary. It is only through God's grace leading to the transformation of my life that I am able to accomplish a goal that was placed on my heart many years ago. Almighty God has given me the physical strength and mental capability to push through this process and see the results of my labor.

My colleagues and my mentors at United Theological Seminary have seen me struggle and labor towards the completion of this document. They have walked with me through my tears of remembering and the onset of illness of my husband. Special thanks go to Rev. Denise Currie-Lowe, Rev. Richard North and Rev. Joyce Gackler who held my arms up when I was tired. I am deeply grateful for my mentors, Dr. Thomas L. Francis, Dr. Sharon Ellis Davis and Dr. Jerome Stevenson who challenged me to stay on course, told me when I was off course and asked the right questions to help me find the answers. My peer associate, Rev. Timothy O. Coston for putting up with all my texting, offering his support, his computer savvyness and his friendship. Also, to my professional associates Dr. Vera Bagneris, Dr. Bridget Weatherspoon and Dr. Rhella Murdough for their encouragement.

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DEDICATION

To my devoted husband, friend and lover, Nathaniel O. Thomas, thank you for putting up with me, encouraging me on this journey and being proud of my accomplishments. To my son, James Hamilton Burton, Jr. and his wife, Lisa, my daughter, Sheri Blands-Pearson and her husband, Owen, my step-son, Nathaniel K. Thomas and to my step-daughter, Kimberly Wisniewski and her husband Michael thank you all for having faith in me to accomplish this goal. To my beautiful grandchildren: Jelijah, Niyesse, Dyante, Alaylah and Alana, Justin and Jordyn; Arionne and Tiffiany; Emily and Chloe and my great-grandchildren: Azariah and Jasmine - thank you for loving me as Grandma and GiGi and carrying on our family's destiny - I love you all, todo mucho! Above all I give thanks to Almighty God who offered me another chance at life offering grace and mercy. I give thanks to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who saved my life by the offer of forgiveness for my sins. I give thanks to the Holy Spirit who guides me throughout my life! My love and gratitude grows deeper each and every day!

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ABBREVIATIONS

NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
Is.	Isaiah
Corin.	Corinthians
LLUMC	Lady Lake United Methodist Church
CSA	Childhood Sexual Abuse
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

How does one know if she has forgiven? You tend to feel sorrow over the circumstance instead of rage; you tend to feel sorry for the person rather than angry with him. You tend to have nothing left to say about it all.

— Clarissa Pinkola Estes, American poet

INTRODUCTION

Clergy and church leadership are called to shepherd and care for the congregation under their watch. This includes care of the most vunerable of the flock – the children. Too often signs of sexual abuse are missed or seen only as a child 'acting out.' Sitting in the pews are also adults who suffer from the wounds of past childhood sexual abuse. As clergy and church leadership, we must be made aware of the pervasiveness of childhood sexual abuse and the various types of psychological and spiritual damage that can result. This is a task that, if addressed properly, can aid in protecting children and help those who were abused to recover and reclaim spiritual wholeness once more.

People consider the church a place of healing and deliverance. They come seeking the Lord for comfort and forgiveness (even if they have been sinned against). They need to feel that God understands their pain and will seek justice on their behalf. When the church fails to acknowledge the victim's suffering, or is legalistic in its beliefs, the injured party perceives God as uncaring. They may erroneously believe that their victimization was part of God's will for their life. If the church shows neither compassion, nor grace, there may be no escape from the suffering of the dark night of the soul.

Secular society turns its back on the most vunerable but the church should be aware of what is happening in the pews. The clergy and its leadership can be so busy with 'church stuff'-- bible study, prayer meetings, committee meetings, balancing the budget, serving fellowship dinners -- that Childhood Sexual Abuse (CSA) and its long-term

effects can go unnoticed, even when it is happening in the most "religious and upright of families." The only recourse for the victim of CSA is to return home Sunday after Sunday and deal in exile with their demons privately. During the defense of my thesis, faculty mentor, Dr. Jerome Stevenson stated, "those who are in exile can't be seen and can't see the promise of the Lord because of the pain that envelopes their life…those who are now liberated from the past see who they are, step out to embrace who they are and be seen as one who has been redeemed by the Lord."[1] Awareness of CSA, and steps for addressing the victims'concerns, need to take place in a compassionate, trusting and confidential setting where the victim feels safe.

This study suggests that Christians who have struggled with sexual abuse during their childhood have the ability to rise above their past and return to wholeness as emotionally strong, joyful and thankful people. It is possible that spiritual renewal can be attained through forgiveness, prayer, worship and faith in a holy and truly present God. The aim of this project is to expand the awareness of childhood sexual abuse and also address the downward spiral of shame, guilt and despair through a process of self-realization of who we are in Christ. This realization can liberate those who suffer from the effects of CSA.

This study addresses the pastoral care and counseling of adult victims who were sexually abused as children and hopes to answer the question: Can the victim of childhood sexual abuse become whole again and regain inner peace and healing?

Chapter One will examine the ministry focus by discussing how the researcher concluded that this particular study on childhood sexual abuse would benefit the subject

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[1] Jerome Stevenson, paraphrased statement by faculty mentor, (Pastoral Care and Counseling, United Theological Seminary, Dayton, OH, January 24, 2017).

context and the church as a whole. Chapter Two explores the biblical foundation of this project by looking at the Old Testament scripture Isaiah 61: 1-4 and the New Testament scripture of Second Corinthians 4: 7-18. These passages will help support the hypothesis of this project that deliverance and healing from childhood sexual abuse is possible. Chapter Three will uncover the history of childhood sexual abuse from antiquity to the post-modern era. In Chapter Four, the researcher will compare and contrast differing viewpoints of current day theologians regarding forgiveness and unforgiveness. Chapter Five is a comparison of modern-day psychological and behavioral indicators of CSA victims. Chapter Six concludes the thesis with an analysis of the project data which will either support or not support the hypothesis that knowledge and awareness of the extent of childhood sexual abuse is necessary for adequate understanding of how recovery is possible.

This project will hopefully serve as a tool for clergy and church leadership that increases awareness of the prevalence of childhood sexual abuse throughout all levels of society, the spiritual damage that results from this type of abuse, and the steps for recovery and healing that are possible.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Childhood sexual abuse has been ignored and discussion of the topic was considered taboo up until the 20th century when the abuse of children came to center stage in the Catholic church. Childhood sexual abuse continues to be whispered about by those who suspect abuse but continue to deny its existence. Childhood sexual abuse needs a Christian response for addressing this painful subject. Scripture informs us that children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb, a reward (Psalm 127: 3). Children are to be loved and treasured, not abused (Mark 10: 14). There are also misconceptions about the profile of the sexual abuser that they are violent and obviously undesirable, when in fact the molester may seem to be an upstanding citizen. Sexual abuse in childhood can lead to sexual maladies such as: promiscuity, prostitution, multiple marriages/divorce, affairs, delusions, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), paranoia, passivity, obsessive compulsive disorder, secrecy, indifference towards life, hatred of self, including but not limited to self-harm and substance abuse.[1]

The initial process of this project was self-discovery. In the Pastoral Care and Counseling cohort we were required to write a detailed spiritual autobiography that we shared in the group. The assigned spiritual autobiography uncovered deep wounds in the

[1] Diane Mandt Langbert, *On the Threshold of Hope* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 1999), 51, 89.

reasearcher's life that were covered up by an attitude of living a perfect life. The spiritual autobiography was shared with one contextual associate who understood the need for privacy and confidentiality. In researching childhood sexual abuse, the researcher realized she had unknowingly experienced sexual abuse beginning at the age of sixteen by her boyfriend who was four years older than her resulting in a 'date' rape scenario at seventeen that resulted in pregnancy. These events lead to various behaviors characteristic with sexual abuse. The researcher had been in denial, covered by shame and guilt that was exasperated by her mother saying it was her fault, insisting on marriage to her boyfriend rather than inquiring about what really happened to her teenage daughter. The marriage resulted in further physical, verbal, emotional and sexual abuse.

In February 2015 volunteers were solicited from various Bible study groups and asked if they would like to help formulate the direction of this project. There was a team of twelve energetic women who were on board with this project and were the bridge to the congregation because of their leadership in the church. These women came from various professional backgrounds such as: education, nursing, military, and social services. The ethnic make-up was eleven white and one black. They were selected because they were interested in making an investment towards the doctoral work of the researcher. More importantly they had a desire to be a part of the expansion of knowledge to the church and community about childhood sexual abuse. These women were committed and could communicate effectively. As contextual associates for this project, they were aware of the importance of confidentiality and patience with the process. Some of these women did not participate in the workshops. They read the context, synergy,

historical, biblical, theological and theoretical paperwork. Over a span of six months we held ten sessions.

The contextual associates helped in the following ways:

- To sharpen the understanding of the needs of the context;
- Plan/design and implement the ministry model within the local context;
- Evaluate the model they are engaging in together and propose changes in direction;
- They evaluated my ability to lead sessions and respond to the group's process; and
- Gave advice on how to balance my leadership skills and move against the enabling of others who have been affected by childhood sexual abuse.

At our first meeting in February we explored spiritual issues they saw in the church and in themselves. We asked the question: what is missing in their life? And we discussed any surface issues or problems visible in the church. The team emerged with adjectives such as: narrow-mindedness, angry, stressed, bitterness, apathetic, dry, lack of emotion, secretive, isolated, lack of spirituality, disconnected from the church or Christ, and perpetually busy. They cared more about the 'appearance' of being religious rather than realizing the truth about God and 'running away' after church worship services rather than engage in fellowship. I shared with them two scriptures: Second Corinthians 4: 7-18 and Isaiah 61: 1-4. We discussed the truth about the fragility of human beings, how God molds us through events in our lives, and how we have the power of God within us through the presence of the Holy Spirit to overcome the past. We also discussed the good news of deliverance by way of salvation, redemption and restoration. This is the

message of God's grace and unmerited favor in our lives. The second and third contextual meetings were informative as to the history childhood sexual abuse; and biblical truths about God reaching out to us to heal us and draw us back to God.

At the fourth contextual associate meeting we discussed the theological and theoretical aspects of the subject. We also focused on how we will implement the project. Initially a pre-test will be given to determine how much knowledge is known about the subject. In this project were narratives from victims of childhood sexual abuse, workshops on the history of childhood sexual abuse, discussion on types of emotional wounds, and how secrets play a big part in sexual abuse. My associates assisted in facilitating discussions. I researched similar workshops to facilitate this piece of the project. At the close of the last session I gave a post-test to determine how much had been learned. Journaling and interviews were two other avenues to assess qualitative information.

There are three professional associates assisting with this project. One associate has a Doctorate in Ministry in Evangelism; another is a pastor and professor with a Doctorate in Ministry in Pastoral Care and Counseling; and my third associate is a chaplain with a Doctorate in Ministry in Pastoral Care and Counseling. The professional associates offered guidance in developing surveys, workshops, community education/support groups, advocacy groups, confidentiality statements, resource materials and time management. In addition, the cohort group mentors, faculty associates, editors and peer associates helped bring this Doctorate of Ministry project and dissertation to fruition.

The project did not limit participation to the context being studied and was open to others outside of my context. Participants were invited from local neighborhood churches and agencies. However, the majority did not respond except for the professional associate who is a pastor of an African Methodist Episcopal Church in Ocala.

Pre-test and post-test questions were open-ended that lead to further discussion. Some of the preliminary questions were:

- What is your family background?
- Are you familiar with the extent/definitions of childhood sexual abuse?
- Have you been a victim of childhood sexual abuse?
- Do you know of any situation of childhood sexual abuse?
- Could you identify a child molester by outward appearance?
- Are you aware of behavioral tendencies of someone who has been abused?
- Is the term 'sexual abuse' uncomfortable to you? Why?
- How might you help if someone tells you they were abused?
- Are you aware how God sees us and cares for us?
- Do you believe God can heal us from past victimization?
- Do you believe in the power of forgiveness? If no, why not?
- Do you believe in the power of the preached word and in prayer?

This project was limited by cultural and ethnic diversity of the population being studied because of its geographical location and also who decided to participate in the workshops. Different cultures and ethnicities handle the problem being explored in different ways. Another limitation was secrecy and trustworthiness of the population. Many did not want to uncover the issue of childhood sexual abuse whether they were the

victim or know of a victim. It is a very sensitive topic to explore. Therefore, if the one who was abused keeps the secret, then the road to wholeness is asphyxiated and the wounds of sexual abuse continues to haunt the victim.

The contextual associates read and reviewed literature that furthered their understanding on what is known and not known in this particular area. This helped to provide the basis for selecting the appropriate methodology.

This project used a qualitative/quantitative mixed method approach, which focused on the knowledge, experience and perspective of the subject at hand. Initial inquiry was broad and general questions. The project needed to explore and get a complete and comprehensive understanding of the scope of knowledge about the subject of child sexual abuse. The qualitative part was done by open-ended questions in the pre and post surveys, journaling, presentations, narratives, workshop questions, observations and interviews/counseling. This study also demonstrated if there was an increase in knowledge at the end of the workshops using quantitative methods such as bar charts to assist in quantifying demographic findings.

Project Calendar

Four sessions over two weekends will cover the following topics:

- Weekend 1 – Friday afternoon: Education presentation of the history of childhood sexual abuse. Scripture presentation of the biblical promises of God to Creation. Discussion on Psychological Trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Discussion on how the keeping of secrets play a role in shame/guilt. This session - 1.5 hours.
- Weekend 1 – Saturday morning: Testimonials from victims of childhood sexual abuse. Biblical storytelling from Second Samuel 13 (the rape of Tamar). This session - 1.5 hours.
- Weekend 2 – Friday afternoon: Talk on the effectiveness of support groups and advocate groups in and outside the church. This session -1 hour.
- Weekend 2 – Saturday morning: Discussion on how religious communities can train leaders and members of the congregation to be a support for individuals who have suffered from childhood sexual abuse. Included will be a discussion on the ministry of presence (listening skills) and confidentiality. This session - 1 hour.

Invitations to participate in the workshops will be sent to local churches and social agencies in the area. The goal of this project is to 1) Make as many individuals aware of the broadness of childhood sexual abuse. 2) Train church leaders and laity on how to recognize, help and assist victims who have experienced abuse as a child.

Synergy

God makes no mistakes. My background and experiences prepared me, as a woman of color, to serve a predominately white (and growing minority) setting such as Lady Lake United Methodist Church in Lady Lake, Florida. The socio-economic, educational level and experiences of many of the 225 parishioners parallels many of the experiences of my life. Through many counseling sessions, they shared with me secrets they had been hiding. Many of the parishioners feel comfortable talking to me about issues of their past. The key to unlocking the door of healing is the ability to be aware of the love and forgiveness of God and experience healing through God's unmerited grace. The art of listening and a compassionate heart is necessary to be able to dig deep, unearth the pain of the contaminated soil of the heart, plant seeds of love and understanding, and water those seeds with God's grace to produce healthy soil for fruitful spiritual growth.

Many of the parishioners have a desire to please God in order to get to heaven. They over extend themselves in a quest to earn forgiveness rather than rest in the loving arms of a Savior who has already forgiven them and offered eternal life. There is a profound need of assurance and to "do everything right to get into heaven."[1] Many are very sorry for their sins. However, I believe many have not forgiven themselves. The people in my Christian Believer class are made up of those who are seekers and on a quest to 'get it right'. Some want so badly to get into heaven. One person in one of my small groups voiced her sorrow in not having gotten it right in seventy years. I don't know if these attitudes are a just a symptom of something larger that looms in the western

[1] Spoken by a member of one of the Sunday school classes on Sunday, November 23, 2014 when I happened to pass through the class to get something out of my office between the 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. service.

Christian church which seems to have lost its way. I hurt because they hurt. Therefore, I serve the church with a compassionate heart.

Lady Lake UMC is a church that has a heart for the Lord and deeply desires to serve in whatever way they can by reaching out to those in need. They listen attentively to my sermons and take my advice when I offer counsel. They have a deep need to be loved and desire to recapture the love they have lost at one time in their lives. When they sing they sing with the conviction of faith in the Risen Lord. Hope is alive and substantiated by the faith they show when faced with trials, tribulations, health and family problems. I am humbled by the love they show my husband and me. I come to them, not only as a black woman, but also, as a broken wounded healer who now, after wrestling with God, experiences God's perfect peace – blessed by God's grace. I hope to teach them how they, too, can rest in the Savior's loving arms. "All things do work together for good according to God's purpose" (Rom. 8: 28).

In Numbers 21: 4-9 the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, because we have spoken against the LORD and you; intercede with the LORD, that He may remove the serpents from us." And Moses interceded for the people. Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live." And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived. We who are suffering need to look at our pain and move through the pain towards healing. Covering up the pain allows it to fester and create a deeper wound.

Lady Lake United Methodist Church needs to transform their hurt to wholeness by recognizing and addressing their past and their pain to come to the realization that they are wounded spiritually. They need to look that pain in the face and turn that pain into a vehicle to help others through similar situations. They need a word from the Lord spoken from a rainbow of voices to free them up emotionally and spiritually. They need to realize, as one body, that we have "all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3: 23), corporately and individually. No one has had a perfect life. They need to realize you cannot use money and outside enjoyments of the flesh to cover-up, or even deny, shame and guilt. They need to realize pain has no skin color, age, socio-economic level, ethnicity or culture. It is not just 'their problem' but it is 'our problem' to help one another heal. It is not 'them against us'; we all are in need of God's grace. Paul's words on reconciliation and forgiveness in Ephesians 2: 11–22 are as timely as ever. As one Bible commentator says, "This paragraph provides one of the most wonderful descriptions of peace and reconciliation … where believers 'come near' to God and to one another (Gentiles and Jews) through the saving death of the Lord Jesus Christ."[2] In Christ, all things are reconciled to each other and to God. As the church of Christ, we must exhibit this gospel-centered reconciliation in our lives both corporately and individually.

A resistance to welcome young children and young families into the church evidences another type of denial in this context. Most of the congregation makes excuses why the church should not extend a hand to younger people. Is it a painful reminder of something that happened to them as a child or to a grandchild? Is it a reminder of past

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[2] P.T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians: The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: MI, Eeardmans, 1999), 182.

sexual abuse as a child that they are trying to sweep under the rug? Is it a reminder of not being able to bear your own children or dealing with the envy of not having grandchildren of your own? Is it hard to deal with a young woman who has a history of being in and out of jail because it reminds them of their own life or their children or grandchildren? Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Luke 18: 16). Jesus calls us to love, care and protect our children because they are part of God's kingdom where there is no suffering or pain.

The problem in this church also extends into denial of being a part of the problem in a racist society that undermines and ignores the poor and marginalized. They do not recognize white privilege. They cover up this denial by saying it is a matter of choice and opportunity. Therefore, many do not recognize the acting out of some minorities may be a symptom deeper that caused harm. It is brushed off as a 'bad' person. Nevertheless, they are generous and give to those in need, but do not engage 'these people' because it reminds them of society's evils – the 'invisible' people of poverty and racial/cultural difference. Some may have been willing participants in perpetuating racism. Is this guilt? One parishioner, formally an alcoholic, said that when he was young he was very prejudiced and hated most if not all minorities, but the Lord transformed his life and attitude. Most of my congregation 'live in a bubble' and are not aware of the pain and injustice the poor and marginalize experience through institutionalized racism and injustice in all levels of society.

Lastly, in this context, they are not receptive to other types of worship experiences other than traditional Anglo-Saxon worship. In addition, most are only

casually welcome other groups different from them. To this end, we have very few 'minorities' and 'young people' in the congregation. The majority of the people do not really engage others unless they have to. Most of the congregation entertain themselves by going on vacations, cruises or entertaining among themselves in their homes. With the exception of a few who are active in hands-on-ministry, most are very generous by bringing food, clothing, baking cookies to hand out during our mission activities, giving money towards a particular ministry and supporting our apportionments. They tend to steer clear of hands on, face-to-face approach to ministry. I think they either don't understand the spiritual needs of those who suffer or they do not care that we are to be the hands and face of Jesus Christ in the community. The attitude is to let somebody else do that type of ministry, we are to busy with our life.

The writer of this paper holds a Bachelors degree in Bible from Philadelphia Biblical University (now Carin University) and Master of Divinity from New York Theological Seminary. Her experiences in these institutions prepared her to minister as one who has biblical, historical and spiritual knowledge of Jesus Christ who physically engaged the outcasted and the marginalized. Professionally, she worked at the Department of Social Services in New York. Her volunteer experience in counseling began as a Rape Advocate in New Jersey and counseling of homeless families through an outreach ministry of a local Catholic church. Since 2003 she has been actively engaged in licensed pastoral ministry. The writer is currently an Elder with the United Methodist Church (Florida Conference). At Florida Hospital (Orlando) and Waterman Village (Mt. Dora) she completed two units of Clinical Pastoral Education. She also has served in a variety of church settings: predominately black, white and now a growing multi-cultural

venue. She has also served in a variety of offices in the church from Sunday school secretary to assistant to the pastor and now as senior pastor. Her experience has been wide and diverse on the local, district and national level. She is a motivator, an encourager and serves the people of the Kingdom of God with compassion and grace.

The writer is also a strong sprit-filled woman who has overcome adversity and believes most, if not all problems can be overcome in one way or another. Sometimes our problems are not solved in the way we would like things to be solved. But God will change us and change our attitude towards the problem and other people in order to cope. In the past, the writer has developed ministries for children, youth and adults and empowered and equipped leaders to run these ministries. She is committed to Jesus Christ and the path on which God has placed her. She loves people and loves her family. The writer sees herself as a work in progress, a broken vessel that has been restored, but also aiming for Christian Perfection. Over the years those who offered her understanding, non-judgmental love, grace, mercy and opportunity to grow in all areas of her life transformed her life. In turn this is what she offers her congregation, her community and the world.

The writer entered the Doctoral program at United Theological Seminary because of the diverse and spiritual filled student body and staff. She heard about the many outstanding graduates who went on to transform the world and grow God's Kingdom. She desires to be a part of United's history in changing the world and help usher in God's beloved community. In addition, she believes she will receive the best education and training needed to serve a church in a time such as this. She needed a place where she

could not only learn, but also experience the move of the Holy Spirit and be refreshed spiritually.

Serving the twenty-first century church with a focus on Pastoral Care and Counseling will allow greater service to those who suffer. The majority of the church in the next twenty years will be filled with aging baby-boomers, who continue to carry the pain of deep wounds. The twenty-first century church has the challenge of ministering to a divided country politically, culturally and racially; a divided and hostile world; divided families where different types of abuse was experienced; and a church divided on many social issues of injustice. We, who are wounded and broken, come to the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ seeking forgiveness, reconciliation, grace and mercy from a Holy God.

There are many common cords between the author's life and the lives of her congregation. The congregation and the author are products of a middle to upper-middle socio-economic upbringing with no direct exposure to poverty, akin to 'living in a bubble'. All during her life, she had contact with other nationalities and in particular whites in her family of origin, neighborhood, education, friends and in-laws. Therefore, being a black woman, the writer is very comfortable around whites and other nationalities, yet understands social injustice towards people of color. She served a black church in New Jersey (as one of twelve ministers) and currently serving her second predominately white congregation in Florida.

Alcoholism, adultery and abuse are prominent in Lady Lake United Methodist Church. Furthermore, there is lack of exposure to people different from their normal circle of friends and acquaintances. The same problems exist across cultural, racial and socio-economic lines. As we open the door to discuss these issues it will become

apparent that alcoholism, adultery and abuse has no color. Many parishioners are in their second marriage. Most of the children and grandchildren live out of the state; therefore, interaction is minimal. The majority of the members are conservative professionals with at least two degrees. Most of them have not had a connection with other racial or cultural groups other than in a classroom or work environment. They are skilled in many areas but very much retired into a community of golfing, cruising and socializing amongst their own. As they age, they are reminded of their failings to society and to God. As they grapple with sin, their salvation and rediscover the loving-kindness of God, hopefully they will realize that we are all made in the *Imago Dei.* As they grow in Christ and hear about the re-assurance of God's love shown through the God of many different colors hopefully, healing will be accomplished through the reconciling love of Jesus Christ.

This project is focused on spiritual healing and a return to wholeness of a hurting church through workshops, preaching, teaching, and narratives. The project will focus on compassion, empathy, understanding, humility and justice in acts of ministry to a hurting church and a hurting community. Relationship, koinonia and God's restorative justice are keys to building God's Kingdom here on earth. Hopefully, God's healing power, through the power of the Holy Spirit, will bring spiritual healing to reconcile families and culturally diverse communities. Through lack of understanding and connection, and through personal suffering and pain people have become estranged and alienated from each other because we have not experienced and do not understand their pain. We all can become wounded healers in community as we serve one another.

The writer will begin with a core group to respond to a questionnaire addressing certain problems in the church. This group will assist her (along with their participation

in) in the implementation of relationship building exercises involving prayer, forgiveness and repentance. During this time period she will host a number of small groups addressing abuse, past hurts, personal relationships, cultural/racial differences and similarities, justice issues, forgiveness, spiritual warfare and the need for community. She will invite preachers and teachers, lay and ordained, to minister to the participants on these same issues. Pre-test and post-test surveys will be taken to get an idea of the amount of knowledge and where they stand on certain issues. Invitations will also be extended to other congregations to join our workshops, pray, worship, fellowship and end the sessions by sharing Holy Communion as one Body in Christ.

Hopefully, this project will lead the congregation and the people who attend to embrace the Kingdom of God in its fullness. Hopefully, this project will transform lives and open the door to become spiritually whole once again. We as the church are here not only to gain knowledge of the Incarnate Christ, but also to be the Incarnate Christ in the community and beyond by serving, doing, touching and experiencing God in a totally new and different way. Hopefully, this project will help this congregation and the writer to make sense of our lives and why we are together in this particular location at this particular time.

We must do our own theology to get a better sense of who we are in God's eyes. We need to allow the healing touch of the Holy Spirit to move beyond the four walls of the church and reach out to those who suffer. Lady Lake United Methodist Church needs to re-think who they are in Christ and reassess what they can offer to the community. We need to be reminded of the human condition and also be reminded that we are called to serve and minister to those who suffer. If this is accomplished then healing and

transformation is possible on both sides. If we open up to expose our personal hurts and allow the love of God to heal, no matter who channels that love, wholeness is possible. As we apply the balm of Gilead to our lives there is a chance we will return from exile and grow into the beloved community God calls us to and experience koinonia with no respect to culture, race or socio-economic levels that continue to divide us.

In Second Corinthians 5: 17, we are told **"**Therefore if any person is in Christ he is a new creation the old [previous moral and spiritual condition] has passed away. Behold, the new is here." The writer prays that her project will lead Lady Lake United Methodist Church to be an active part in transforming their own lives and also transforming the lives of others. There are five goals the writer has relative to this project:

- To learn more about herself, and why God has placed her on this particular path at this particular time of life.
- To help her congregation learn more about the fullness of God in Christ and be assured that there is a reason why they were placed on earth. So many are still questioning God as to why they are here.
- To hope the congregation learns, that compassion, empathy, understanding, humility and justice in acts of ministry to a hurting church and a hurting community can be accomplished. Relationship and community are key to healing and building God's Kingdom here on earth.
- To help the congregation learn that even when we disagree a relationship is still possible. It is all wrapped up in that four letter word – L-O-V-E.
- To learn, and help the congregation believe, that reconciliation is still possible, even after years of estrangement if both parties are open and willing to dialog and

forgive. It is a choice. But, if reconciliation does not occur, it is God's will to be done.

Life impacts us in many different ways. Yet, in many different ways we are all the same. We are all here to help one another on this pilgrimage. We are not separate islands unto ourselves or to our own kind even though we live this way. We are creatures that God created and called 'very good'. We are called to live as the beloved community. We are a people who are made in the *Imago Dei* no matter who we are or where we have come from. God orders our steps and if we get out of step with God our lives become disordered. However, there is a way out of the quagmire of abuse.

In conclusion, the writer prays that this experience will confer not only to her, but also to her congregation just how much God loves us and cares for us. God suffers with us. God rejoices with us. God continues to offer healing to victims of childhood sexual abuse by way of educating clergy and leadership in the church and in the community regarding the fundamental behaviors of victims and the broadness of what is considered childhood sexual abuse. This doctoral project will assist any church with similar problems as such in Lady Lake United Methodist Church to grow into a more loving, forgiving community who realizes that transformation and healing is possible only if we are open and enter into the process God has ordained for our lives.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

Old Testament

Isaiah 61: 1-4 - The Good News of Deliverance

> The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

The following exegesis of Isaiah 61: 1-4 and Second Corinthians 4: 7-18 support the view that through difficult circumstances in life one can emerge from brokenness to healing by facing the truth of life events. My conclusion from the exegesis of these two texts demonstrates the awareness of God's presence during suffering, the power to overcome the pain and the ability to recapture the joy that was stripped away by tragic events.

Life can throw us an unexpected curve ball from our own bad choices, toxic relationships or unexpected situations that spiral out of our control. When we have been wounded and broken, we find ourselves in a place of swirling darkness and despair, unable to find a way out or find a salve to heal the hurt. A wound can rupture the soul caused by events in our lives. We desire to rebuild our lives with a joyful heart, but don't

know where to begin. The Lord is on our side to defend us, to save us, to offer us hope and even amidst a 'city' – a life - that still lies in ruins provide "an oil of gladness instead of mourning" where we can still praise God with what remains in our life.

The writer was a victim of sexual abuse by someone she trusted who took advantage of her innocence and ignorance as a teenager. She became pregnant which disrupted her life plans, brought rejection by her family and friends, and threw her into a cycle of physical, verbal, sexual and emotional abuse. A cloud of shame and guilt overshadowed her life, as she was the unwilling partner of another's sinful act upon her body and psyche. She is now a witness to God's restorative power in her life, having experienced God's power to overcome obstacles, face pain and rebuild a life that was in ruins. This is a story of good news, restoration and praise. She can now return home and hold her head up high, as a witness to God's redeeming love.

The Old Testament text offers us the good news of deliverance, restoration and renewal to those who put their full trust in the Lord. Those who trust in the Lord are the oaks of righteousness. The Lord offers us joy in the midst of rebuilding our lives from what still haunts us. There is hope and deliverance from the captivity of pain, sorrow and lost years. Our God is a very present help in a time of need. We can be made whole!

In this text, the prophet Isaiah proclaims the 'good news' of the Lord to those who were exiled from the land. Even though the prophet is speaking directly to the people of Zion and their desire to return to Jerusalem, the same can be applied to people today who are in emotional distress. Isaiah told Ahaz, "If you do not stand firm in faith, you shall

not stand at all" (Isaiah 7: 9).[1] That statement applies to all of us. The commitment of the Holy One of Israel to the descendants of David is the same relative to our own faith in God who promises to restore us and bring joy and peace back into our lives once more.[2] We can now live a full and joyful life despite our past simply by our faith in God's promise to restore our life.

The book of Isaiah is part of the Prophetic Literature found in the Old Testament Hebrew Scriptures. The history and context of the book of Isaiah is not fully known because scholars contend that there is more than one author. Traditionally, scholars have divided the book into three sections – generally known as 'First Isaiah' chapters 1 – 39, 'Second Isaiah' chapters 40 – 55 and 'Third Isaiah' chapters 56 - 66. Over the past century scholars have poured over the book in trying to determine what portions might be attributed to Isaiah ben Amoz, who lived in the late eighth and early seventh centuries BCE.[3] However, recent scholarship suggests much of the book, particularly chapters 40 – 66 dates to the sixth and fifth centuries, making it impossible that Isaiah ben Amoz would have written major portions of the book.[4] The setting for the later portions of the book is generally understood to be the early post-exilic period, roughly 538-515 B.C.E. when Israel was in the initial stages of its struggle to resettle the land of Judah, rebuild the Temple, and reestablish the worship of Yahweh. The people were beset with economic

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[1] Gene M. Tucker, "The Book of Isaiah 1-39" in *The New Interpreter's Bible – A Commentary in Twelve Volumes, Volume VI* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2001), 40.

[2] Tucker, *The New Interpreter's Bible –Volume VI*, 40.

[3] David L. Peterson. "Introduction to Prophetic Literature" in *The New Interpreter's Bible – A Commentary in Twelve Volumes, Volume VI* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2001), 3.

[4] Peterson, *The New Interpreter's Bible –Volume VI*, 3.

hardship and hostility from their neighbors and suffered great despair over their unrealized hopes for a glorious return.[5]

Little is known about the life of Isaiah ben Amoz other than what is written in the book of Isaiah. Isaiah ben Amoz was an insider who had access to kings; his vocation was in the Temple of Jerusalem and he had children and disciples who collected and treasured his work.[6] Despite his access to the privileged circles of royalty and power, he also linked himself with his people in a woeful cry of dereliction: Woe is me! For I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and live among a people of unclean lips (Isaiah 6: 5).[7] He is not poor, nor derelict but is overcome by his sin when confronted with God's holiness.

From the tenor of the text, Isaiah may have gone through questionable and embarrassing situations that he may have considered himself unworthy in speaking for God because God's holiness. Because Isaiah recognizes his sinfulness in relation to a holy God he thought he might be disqualified as a voice for the Lord. However, in praise to God, the Lord uses the most unsuspecting people to speak a word of encouragement to those who, by the world's standards, are deemed 'no good' or of 'no use' to society. Despite our past, God can still use the downtrodden and brokenhearted to speak a word of encouragement and deliverance. Instead of mourning our past, we now can praise God for grace and mercy and recover the 'devastation' of our lives ruined by past sins.

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[5] M.D. Bratcher, "Salvation achieved (Isaiah 61:1-7, 62:1-7, 65:17-66:2)," *Review & Expositor, 88(2) (1991)*, 177-188.

[6] Peterson, *The New Interpreter's Bible –Volume VI*, 36.

[7] Bernhard W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998), 293.

What is prophetical literature? It is a genre of literature, poetry and/or prose, which incorporates the sayings, teachings or activities of Israel's prophets during a particular time period. The term "prophet" derives from the Greek noun *προφήτης (prophētēs),* the root word meaning, "to foresee."[8] Prophets not only addressed current circumstances but also addressed future occurrences by way of visions and oracles received from God. Prophets, many who were priests, were a special class of religious specialists.[9] Israel's prophets spoke on behalf of those without power and on behalf of those oppressed by the powerful.[10]

Prophetic literature was written to give people good news and hope even in the midst of oppression. It was written to the people, reassuring them that despite their sin and consequential judgment of their sin, Yahweh would continue to fight for them. It was written to the people in times of exile and despair when all seemed to be lost. Yahweh would eventually restore them and restore them to a place of plenty. In the same sense, quoting from the New Testament book of Romans 8: 28: We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to God's purpose. This text echoes the Old Testament Abrahamic, Mosaic and Noahic Covenants of the promise of a great name, land and blessing with the only demand that Yahweh be loved exclusively. The everlasting covenant, the Davidic Covenant, is the overarching promise from Yahweh that a Holy and Righteous Savior would come forth from the seed of David's lineage, separating God's holy people apart from the sinful Israel.

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[8] Peterson, *The New Interpreter's Bible –Volume VI*, 4.

[9] Peterson, *The New Interpreter's Bible- Volume VI*, 5.

[10] Peterson, *The New Interpreter's Bible – Volume VI*, 8.

Overall, the book of Isaiah focuses on a righteous Zion, chosen by God, who moves from darkness and despair to hope of redemption with the promise of future salvation by a Holy God. The prophet Isaiah boldly proclaims that Yahweh will break in on the critical circumstances in which his people live and will transform their despair, poverty, and oppression.[11]

In order to attempt to get a clearer understanding of who is speaking we must examine the structure and form of the text:

> The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. (Isaiah 61: 1-4)

It is clear that the person who is speaking feels they have urgency about them from the Lord to bring good news to those who suffer and are broken. This wounded healer who suffered brokenness now has a word that deliverance is possible and joy can be restored.

One particular scholar states, "The figure [speaking] is both "anointed and sent, and so represents a coalescing of [similar] roles once belonging to Cyrus (as liberator) and servant."[12] This reference is to Cyrus in his edict in 539 BC that the Jews could

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[11] Bratcher, *Review & Expositor,* 177-188.

[12] S.D. Mason, "Getting a "handle" on holistic Christian mission: the contribution of Isaiah 61 as a discrete Old Testament voice," *Missiology*, *40(3) (2012),* 295-313.

return to the land.[13] Cyrus king of Persia felt he was given an edict by the Lord to rebuild the temple saying, "This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: "'The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and has appointed me to build a temple at Jerusalem in Judah."[14]

The similarities in syntax allude to the possibility that Cyrus played an important part needed to comfort Zion in the midst of their misfortune. Jesus of Nazareth, in the gospel of Luke chapter 4, used the same text, Isaiah 61: 1-4, which he read in the synagogue to announce the beginning of his ministry. The question is why was this particular text put here? Was the writer quoting Cyrus to make a point?

Isaiah 61 points directly to the captivity of those being oppressed and in exile in the Old Testament Hebrew Scriptures. Jesus Christ addresses the same issue in the New Testament. It can also be compared to one called and anointed to give hope in the midst of suffering today. That thought is supported by another scholar who argues, "Isaiah 61 provides one of the earliest attestations of the idea of a theological exile that extends beyond the temporal and geographical bounds of the Babylonian captivity."[15]

In other words, Isaiah 61: 1-4 can have just as much impact now as it did when written because of the relationship of sin, suffering and deliverance. Isaiah 61 is a prophetic call of hope despite circumstances. Our situations in life do not define who we are as God's beloved sons and daughters. Our trials and tribulations are limited whereas God's love is eternal. The realization of this truth should open the door of faith in God's

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[13] Mason, *Missiology,* 295-313.

[14] "Bible Hub, Isaiah 48:28 cross-reference to 2 Chronicles 36:23," *Biblehub.com,* accessed February 24, 2015.

[15] B. C. Gregory, "The postexilic exile in third Isaiah: Isaiah 61:1-3 in light of Second Temple hermeneutics," *Journal Of Biblical Literature*, *126*(3) (2007), 475-496.

sovereignty over our lives and God's promise to give us a future – in this we should put on a garment of praise instead of putting on a cloak of mourning because of debris from former wreckage of our past.

The text begins on a positive note with the presence of divinity through God's Spirit. The mention of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Triune God, in the midst of suffering is enough to offer hope. Throughout the Scriptures the presence of the Holy Spirit meant the power to overcome inconceivable obstacles that were present. For example, when the Spirit of the Lord came upon Othniel, judge of Israel, he was able to go to war and defeat the king of Aram.[16] Another example of the power of the Holy Spirit is when Micah called out that he was filled with power, filled with the Spirit of the Lord to be able to speak boldly to Israel's (Jacob) sin.[17] Declaring the presence of the Holy Spirit is an announcement that power is present to overcome anything.

The prophet needs no introduction and speaks for himself, demanding our attention without being self-conscious and with tremendous authority.[18] There are no excuses that he is anointed and that God sent him. The reader needs to give his or her full attention to what is being said in the next few verses. However, this is not the first time the Spirit has come upon the prophet which is seen in Isaiah 6. Isaiah 42: 1 states, 'I will put my Spirit on him'; also Isaiah 11: 2 declares, 'The Spirit of the Lord will rest on

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[16] Judges 3:10-14. New Revised Standard Version. Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references in this document are from the NRSV.

[17] Micah 3: 8-10

[18] Barry G. Webb, "The Message of Isaiah," *The Bible Speaks Today,* J.A. Motyer, ed., (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 233.

him'.[19] God's Holy Spirit has made residence on the prophet. The Holy Spirit provides power to the victim to overcome obstacles and achieve liberation from past devastations.

The context of this project is centered on removing the power of shame and guilt oppressing those who have been abused as children and replacing it with freedom and grace by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Many victims are in denial of their past and do not claim they were victims. Shame involves discomfort in facing others because of one's own vulnerability.[20] Guilt implies internalization of the moral values of society.[21] There is no shame or guilty dishonor that God's Holy Spirit cannot defeat. This is good news to people who are bound to the past. Families and people who have experienced, sexual abuse, physical child abuse, family violence, and homicides are the most serious social problems in the community, especially the black community.[22] As people are physically abused and violated, they feel powerless, mortified, and full of shame, especially in cases of rape.[23] Just as in Second Samuel 13, when Tamar was raped by her half-brother, Amnon, she felt powerless and was shut out of society, confined to her brother Absalom's house, "a desolate woman" (2 Samuel 13:20). We will never know if her honor was restored to her and her life rebuilt because Scripture does not mention her again. She was never heard from again. The stigma of dysfunction in the family needs to be overcome by the power

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[19] Webb, *The Bible Speaks Today*, 233.

[20] Andrew Sung Park, *From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 35.

[21] Park, *From Hurt to Healing,* 35.

[22] Toinette M. Eugene and James Newton Poling, *Balm for Gilead: Pastoral Care for African American Families Experiencing Abuse* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 11.

[23] Park, *From Hurt to Healing*, 41.

present in the local church and the Holy Spirit, to confront and overcome these problems so that its members can become spiritually whole again.

Harper's Bible Dictionary defines shame as such:

> [It] is a concept that is expressed in the biblical writings by a variety of Hebrew and Greek terms. Most frequently, it denotes the guilt a person feels or should feel for having sinned against God, but it can also connote the disgrace one finds in failure, either by actively having done something wrong or by having failed to do something right. While the OLD TESTAMENT writers did not really have an idea of 'conscience,' they did believe that there should be a natural sense of disgrace and unworthiness when one sins against God or one's companions. It was considered appalling when people no longer had any sense of shame. In the NEW TESTAMENT, it is possible to be ashamed (or not ashamed) of Christ and his gospel.[24]

The Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology broadens the definition of shame:

> [It] is a consequence of one's own sin or being an unwilling part of another's sinful act being acted upon the victim. Feelings of guilt and shame are subjective acknowledgments of an objective spiritual reality. Guilt is judicial in character; shame is relational. Though related to guilt, shame emphasizes sin's effect on self-identity. Sinful human beings are traumatized before a Holy God, exposed for failure to live up to God's glorious moral purpose. The first response of Adam and Eve to their sinful condition was to hide from God, and consequently from one another. Christ's unhindered openness to the Father was both a model for life and the means of removing humanity's shame. Christian self-identity is transformed "in God". Shame is a godly motivator. A virtuous life shames the ungodly, providing a context for evangelism. A believer's shame for past sin is a spur to forsake sinning, to renounce disobedience, and to minister the gospel. The prospect of shame at Christ's return is sometimes a necessary inducement to godliness. Paul uses the concept of shame most frequently with the immature Corinthian believers, urging them not to shame themselves or him. The prophet Zephaniah says shameless people flaunt their ungodliness, calloused to God. Those not clothed with Christ's righteousness will be judged.[25]

What is present in this text is a prophet who identifies with the sinfulness of the corporate body of Israel. Their sin has offended a Holy God. Yet, God because of God's loving-kindness, *hesed,* does not love us any less and still desires communion with us.

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[24] P. J. Achtemeier, "Harper & Row and Society of Biblical Literature," *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1985), 932.

[25] W. A. Elwell, & Elwell, W. A, in *Evangelical dictionary of Biblical theology*, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1996).

Because of that identification God is not only speaking to those who are brokenhearted, bound and held captive to sin's web of despair, but identifying with the pain. Therefore, healing is complete. The anointing comes from identification with the audience. The speaker can now speak with power through the presence of the third person of the Trinity, the eternal Holy Spirit, who knows all and is in all. However, the text only identifies the sinner and not the one sinned against who is also broken-hearted and deeply wounded. Healing and a return to wholeness is still available to sin's victim who also suffers from shame and disgrace from being sinned upon.

The oil of gladness now replaces the feeling of humiliation or failure. In Scripture, oil symbolizes the presence of the Spirit. Therefore, joy is what the Holy Spirit gives to those who mourn. They can now praise God instead of fearing rejection because when the Spirit's power is present the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control are evident in a person's life. Through a person's faith in the redemptive act of Jesus Christ on the cross, our God has now redeemed that person's shameful acts so they are now justified and declared righteous while working through their brokenness!

The tradition of the church (Roman Catholic) in handling sin is through assistance in easing the pain of human anguish and guilt through confession to the clergy. In the New Testament, it states "if we confess our sins to the Lord, he is faithful to forgive us our sins" (1 John 1: 9). We are also urged to confess our sins to one another so that healing may take place. One of the great mysteries of faith is the process of redemption, reconciliation and transformation. At the heart of God is the desire to forgive; making confession and forgiveness spiritual exercises that can transform our lives. Confession is

a difficult discipline for us because we all too often view the believing community as a fellowship of saints before we see it as a fellowship of sinners and we cannot bear to reveal our failures and shortcomings to others.[26]

However, in Isaiah 61 the general task of the anointed one called to preach the good news is not just to any people who grieve because things did not work out in their favor, but also to the righteous who suffer and not to the oppressors who afflict the righteous.

The reasons given are:

> First, their broken-hearted-ness is unknown, but physical, social, or spiritual problems might cause this condition.
>
> Second, the anointed one called and sent by God is also sent to bind up or heal encouraging them that there will be no more adversity when the righteous see God with their own eyes, for God will defeat their enemies, bless their land, "bind up" the bruises, and heal the wounds that God inflicted on them - it is unclear how this will happen.
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> Third, this anointed one is "to proclaim" (*liqrō᾽*) liberty. But the question here is liberty or deliverance from what? The background of the text may suggest release from slavery or another type of bondage but we are not sure.
>
> Fourth, is also "to proclaim" (*liqrō᾽*), but now the one speaking declares that the "favorable year of the Lord" and the "day of vengeance" of our God has arrived. God is present, God is here to avenge you and give favor over your life.
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> The fifth responsibility for this one who is called is to comfort all those who were mourning and sorrowing. This could be in terms of helping to bring a resolution to the problem, and restoring peace and joy in the lives of the ones who are brokenhearted.
>
> Lastly, the sixth responsibility is to provide for those grieving in Zion "by giving" them something new and "beautiful, glorious" (*pĕ᾽ēr*) for their head in place of the ashes. In other words, their future will be in stark contrast to their past. Their lives will be transformed in all areas.[27]

The challenge here is that a voice is needed to proclaim the good news in order to effectuate healing and deliverance to those deeply wounded. The common element is

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[26] Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (San Fransisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1978), 145.

[27] G. Smith, "*Isaiah 40-66* Vol. 15B," (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2009), 634-636.

brokenness of the one called and the brokenness of those who are hearing the good news. Therefore, healing is effectuated on both ends of the spectrum.

There is no dishonor, shame or guilt that faith in God cannot overcome. We must first realize we are all sinners even if we were sinned against. We are not alone in our sin, even if we were sinned against. The power of unity through mutual confession and non-judgmental accountability is what heals. That said, in community we are all transformed together by God's unconditional grace as we communicate and cry out to one another. As King David said, "Let me not be put to shame, O Lord, for I have cried out to you".[28] Shame, guilt, confession and repentance will cause one to desire a godly life.

There is healing for those who, as part of the 'Christian community,' grieve for the mistakes made in their lives. They are the wounded healers who come to proclaim the good news. They are the anointed ones called by God. They are anointed because of the experiences they share are one and the same experiences as the audience who listens. They are anointed through the power of the Holy Sprit to say, 'Look at what the Lord has done!' The anointing of the wounded one called to preach the good news not only encourages, but it binds up the wounds and heals those who hear the message.

There is an old African-American Spiritual called 'There is a Balm in Gilead'.

> There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole;
> There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.
> Sometimes I feel discouraged, and think my work's in vain,
> But then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again.[29]

I have found that 'Balm in Gilead' in Jesus Christ. My own personal experience has led me to believe that a contrite, repentant and forgiving heart is necessary for full

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[28] Psalm 31: 17

[29] Eugene and Poling, *Balm for Gilead*, 182.

recovery from shame and guilt. It takes time and reflection in order for the Holy Spirit to do a spiritual heart surgery where all constraints and strongholds are lifted and reveal the goodness of God despite circumstances. It goes back to Romans 8: 28, "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to God's purpose." Once we begin to connect with God, learning to love and trust God for our healing, we emerge as a beautiful butterfly free to praise God's presence through the tough times. Once we realize that we can emerge glorifying God as one once captive in an unsightly cocoon of despair and build upon our experiences to help others re-build their lives. This is a message of God's grace and God's unmerited favor to re-build, that which was lost. Whatever had been lost, will be restored, whatever was imperfect has now been made perfect, whatever was ruined and devastated will be repaired, even from pass generations. There is no such thing as a generational curse.

In my cohort group a devotional was given by one of my mentors: "If ashes could talk, they had a purpose before they were ashes; if ashes could talk, Moses could not have seen the Glory; if ashes could talk and God is in our lives – God will tell us our purpose."[30]

I am called and anointed to bring the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ! I no longer mourn but now praise God for what God has accomplished in my life. I am here to display the glory of the Lord in my life and be a beacon of light to those who may still be held captive in darkness. I stand anointed to proclaim that this is the year of the Lord's favor in my life.

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[30] Jerome Stevenson, quote by faculty mentor, (Pastoral Care and Counseling lecture, United Theological Seminary, Dayton, OH, January 26, 2015).

As the prophet cries out, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me', he speaks to those who are spiritually depleted and brokenhearted, because they are still held captive to the past. The Lord God has opened up the prison doors and removed the chains of destruction evident from their former life before Christ entered in. No longer must those who cry out, "Lord, Lord" hold their heads in shame, but they can now walk in the beautiful light of Christ. His death and resurrection offers salvation to all who have faith in his sacrificial work on the Cross for the forgiveness of sins. This remnant, Zion, is now considered oaks of righteousness because the Lord has been glorified – in this we can praise the Lord for the great things he has done!

New Testament

Second Corinthians 4: 7-18 – *Treasure in Clay Jars and Living by Faith*

> But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you. But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture—"I believed, and so I spoke"—we also believe, and so we speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence. Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.

Second Corinthians 4: 7-18 makes the claim that human beings are fragile in mind, body and spirit. Our mind is weak because it can be influenced easily, tossed to and fro

by different doctrines and opinions. Our body is weak because of the frailty of our bones, organs and susceptibility to disease. Our spirit is weak because it can be easily tempted to sin; easily crushed and can experience brokenness. Nevertheless, despite our fragility in mind, body and spirit, Almighty God can take this lump of clay and mold us into the *Imago Dei,* a new creation, through the power of the Holy Spirit and the personal relationship we have with Jesus Christ in our lives. The life of the writer of this paper has been transformed into a life of complete joy and peace. She is a new creation – no longer depressed and discouraged. She is a witness to the power of the Holy Spirit in her life.

The Apostle Paul is a witness to the power of the Holy Spirit in his life. The power transformed his life from persecutor to proselytizer of Christianity. He spoke about trials and difficulties, yet he was victorious in all endeavors, even while he was wasting away. Although Satan may have plans to destroy our lives, it is this treasure, this transformative power that we all have within us that causes us to rise above any treacherous situation by faith and have victory in Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul understood that believers are a work in progress, and that God is working in them to transform their lives into a new creation - from one degree of glory to another.[31] This new creation happens when, by God's grace, a person dies with Christ and then is raised with Christ into newness of life. The treasure of the Holy Spirit is the treasure that is active in our transformation, so that even when our outer self is wasting away our inner self is being renewed day by day. Because all believers have this treasure, we can emerge victorious in all situations, if and only if, we access the power of God's Holy Spirit available to us all.

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[31] J. Paul Sampley, "The Second Letter to the Corinthians," *The New Interpreter's Bible – A Commentary in Twelve Volumes, Volume 11* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2001), 23.

There is widespread scholarly consensus that Second Corinthians is actually a composite of two or more originally separate letters from the Apostle Paul. The Corinthian church was made up of mostly Gentiles from various social and economic standings. The ultimate source of the Apostle Paul's apostolic authority is the God who called him to be an apostle and, indeed, left him no choice but to serve the gospel.[32] He assures the Corinthians that he does speak a certain kind of wisdom, namely, "God's wisdom, secret and hidden" as it is "taught by the Spirit".[33] Twice in Second Corinthians Paul refers to those he addresses as "children," and he emphasizes the candor with which he has spoken to the Corinthians by reason of his affection for them ("our heart is wide open to you"), and pleads that they will be responsive by opening wide their hearts to him.[34]

In contrast to First Corinthians, which addresses division and sinfulness of the congregation, in Second Corinthians Paul defends his legitimacy as an apostle and defends himself against those who question his authority. Through this atmosphere of doubt and misunderstanding he calls for reconciliation. Second Corinthians was written from the Apostle Paul's disappointment that the Corinthians did not come to his aid when he was challenged and 'done wrong' by one of them.[35] Thus, as Christ's "ambassadors" in

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[32] V. P Furnish, "Paul and the Corinthians: The Letters, the Challenges of Ministry the Gospel," *Interpretation, 52(3) (1998),* 229-245.

[33] Furnish, *The New Interpreter's Bible –Volume 11*, 233.

[34] Furnish, *The New Interpreter's Bible –Volume 11*, 235.

[35] Sampley, *The New Interpreter's Bible –Volume 11*, 37.

the world, ministers speak not for themselves but for Him, and are the agents of God's own appeal to accept the reconciliation that is already accomplished with Christ's death.[36]

One reason this letter should give direction to our ministries and missions is that the context for ministry today is similar to the Corinthian church. The Apostle Paul wrote this letter with several convictions brought to bear:

- God is ultimately in control and what has begun in Christ will be completed.
- Satan has plans (and agents) but cannot pose any real threat to believers if they stay alert to God's call.
- As a part of God's new creation, we are a work in progress; and God is working in us to transform us from one degree of glory to another.
- God has given us all a measure of faith and we are to grow strong in that faith.
- We are to walk by faith and not by sight, trusting God in the process.
- We are called to be concerned and care for one another.
- All of God's promises find their "yes," and their fulfillment in Christ.
- We are called to reconcile with God and to one another as God is reconciling the world to himself.[37]

The Corinthian letters show us how to shape our self-image, forming it into the mind of Christ, as Paul did by showing us that God's grace was enough to counteract the worst physical distress and revive the lowest spirit.[38]

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[36] Furnish, *The New Interpreter's Bible – Volume 11*, 242.

[37] Sampley, *The New Interpreter's Bible – Volume 11*, 22-29.

[38] E .Krentz, "Preaching to an Alien Culture: Resources in the Corinthian Letters," *Word & World*, *16(4) (1996),* 471.

The majority of the Apostle Paul's writings are clear in structure and form; however, Second Corinthians stands out all the more strikingly with its unparalleled lack of apparent structure and unity.[39] This may be due to the disunity or repetition of language leading to the possibility of two to four letters compiled to make up this epistle. Therefore, it may be difficult to follow the progression of thought patterns in this letter. Some of the concerns in this text are the lack of the following elements:

- Lack of chiastic structure with a climax showcasing a theological or ethical theme;
- Lack of parallelism in concepts and ideas or catchwords to link passages together;
- Lack of natural breaks or paragraphing.[40]

An example of the possibility of multiple correspondences in the epistle is listing of hardships that appear back-to-back within the same source.[41]

In addition, Second Corinthians has often been viewed as one of Paul's less theological and more pastoral letters, primarily because the reply to his opponents in Corinth occupies so much of his attention.[42] His focus is on healing, transformation and reconciliation despite hardships.

Despite the challenge of the structure and form of Second Corinthians, the text manages to bring home the point that despite our human weakness and trials we can be

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[39] C. L. Blomberg, "The structure of 2 Corinthians 1-7," *Criswell Theological Review (1989), 3*.

[40] Blomberg, *Criswell Theological Review,* 6.

[41] Blomberg, *Criswell Theological Review,* 12.

[42] Blomberg, *Criswell Theological Review,*15.

transformed and resurrected to a new life in Christ. The writer of this paper suffered much adversity and tried to bury her pain and "sweep it under the rug" by not addressing her situation truthfully. However, when she faced up to the truth of what had happened, she was set free and her life was transformed to a new life in Christ.

We all know hardship, suffering, and adversity are all part of our life's journey on earth. Most of the time we try to bury our pain, and disguise our shame through false masks we wear on a daily basis. Our adversities should strengthen our resolve, but this is not always the case. The Apostle Paul was well versed in his tribulations. He boasted about his being shipwrecked, beaten, and stoned. He went without food or water, always in danger from both the Jews and the Gentiles, and frequently he was given over to death but yet gloried in his weakness. His audience did not understand that the glory of his ministry harmonized with unrelenting events that threatened his life.

In this section of second Corinthians 4: 7-18, the Apostle Paul speaks about this treasure in "jars of clay." He exults in his weaknesses and explains why the divine glory must be contained in the earthen vessel of his frail, pummeled body.[43] God's power is made known through suffering. This is why Paul's ministry is legitimate and powerful. The glory of any ministry must be seen in terms of both cross and resurrection.[44] God's plan to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ can be the result of suffering and triumphant victory over adverse situations.

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[43] D. E. Garland, *2 Corinthians* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 219.

[44] Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 219.

The term earthen vessels *(ostrakinoi skeuē)* imply something fragile, inferior, and expendable;[45] and illustrate how an ordinary person can possess an invaluable treasure within. An earthen vessel is "quintessentially fragile," prone to breakage, easily chipped and cracked[46] somewhat cheap and lacking beauty; yet, of such worth that God can use it in many powerful ways. Scripture says, "How the precious sons of Zion, once worth their weight in gold, are now considered as pots of clay, the work of a potter's hands!"[47] This is a great contrast between Paul's own pitiful weakness and the great power of God.[48]

The truth about being human is that we are fragile and easily broken. Humans are molded and influenced by good and bad events in our lives. Humans are clay jars that capture every event in our lives. However, there is something very special about these clay jars – we are made in the likeness and image of God. Within these clay jars is a treasure beyond measure and beyond anything we could ever imagine. The treasure we possess is the power of God within us that gives us the ability to transform our lives over and over again to something better, despite tragedy and failings. God is amazing! God's grace is amazing! Almighty God gives us the power of the Holy Spirit to emerge victorious in all situations. The key is to unlock the door and allow the power to flow through us and trust the process. The question is why do we have so much trouble with allowing the power of the Holy Spirit flow through us?

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[45] Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 219.

[46] Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 219.

[47] J. T. Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel: An Examination of the Catalogue of Hardships in the Corinthian Correspondence,* SBLDS 99 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1988), 167–68.

[48] Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 219.

We may consider our lives to be worthless, beset by problems we caused and/or problems that just came upon us. We may question God but we are not driven to despair. We may be persecuted and victimized, but we know we are not forsaken nor abandoned, because of God's promise to never leave us. Sometimes we struggle to hold on to this belief. We may be crushed and struck down but we manage to get up time and time again to rebuild our lives. We have power to rebuild what was taken away. What is this treasure that gives us the power and the resolve to rise up and be a witness of what God can do? This treasure is the power of God's Spirit that resides in those who believe.

The Apostle Paul inferred that these clay jars, made from the dust of the earth, lacked any outward luster in contrast to the treasure, and their cheapness would disguise the fact that they contained anything valuable at all.[49] Also, earthen vessels had no enduring value and were so cheap that when they were broken no one attempted to mend them – they were thrown away - discarded.[50] How many times have we thought of our lives, or were told that our lives were useless or no good? How many times have we been told or thought of ourselves as failures? How many times have family or friends just simply walked away or disposed of us because we were a disappointment to them. The comparison of clay pots to silver or gold vessels showed the difference in their value. In the rabbinic tradition, wine cannot keep well in silver or gold vessels, but only in the lowliest of vessels—earthen ones—to contrast words of Torah [wine] does not keep well in one who considers himself or herself to be the same as silver or gold vessels, but only

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[49] Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 219.

[50] Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 219.

in one who considers himself or herself the same as the lowliest of vessels—earthen ones.[51]

Even the Apostle Paul, who called himself the least of the apostles, did not mean that ministers are cheap and worthless, though they may be regarded or treated that way by the world and even by other Christians – he meant that as a minister of the new covenant he is a bearer of good tidings, a glorious divine treasure, even for those who despise him.[52] Scripture says "God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong, the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are."[53] God did this to show the world that the treasure within this lowly clay pot is the treasured power that is from God. In that way, no one can boast before God, but only give glory to God for what God has done in his or her life. God can use anyone.

The Apostle also affirms that God's power is only manifest in humans in their weakness and shame.[54] This would undercut the tendency of overconfidence and pride of the messenger. God's power is only present in weakness. The afflictions have caused some stress fractures in the earthen vessel, but it remains whole because divine glue holds it together.[55] Even Paul had been discredited and accused that God's power was not with him when it was. The Corinthian church failed to see God's power at work through the suffering of the Apostle and what he had accomplished despite life threatening events.

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[51] R. Hammer, *Sipre Deut.* 48 to 11:22, *Sifre: A Tannaitic Commentary on the Book of Deuteronomy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), 193.

[52] Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 219.

[53] 1 Cor. 1: 27–28

[54] Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 219.

[55] Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 219.

Those who desire the treasure should not mock the shabby appearance of the vessel that brought it to them.[56] Along with human suffering, this also includes illness, hardships, and financial woes. The treasure contained in this clay pot enables the power of God to sustain them through any calamity. It is God's power within that energizes and motivates the person to have hope and faith that God will see them through tough situations. Despite troubles there is joy, despite illness there is thanksgiving, despite all these sufferings there is a need to serve and encourage others so they will become carriers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! It is not that we revel in our problems, but we know that ultimate glory awaits us when we will see God face to face!

Paul believes all his suffering has not destroyed him because he rests secure in the hands of God, who upholds him. He faces rejection and dejection, but nothing will ever ultimately defeat him or destroy him because of God's love and power.[57] This internal strength that we all have, enables us to endure but not be crushed and driven to despair because God does not abandon those who love God even when we suffer. Paul also knows God sustains him through it all and enables him to continue to speak for God. Paul also knows that in death God will not abandon him but will raise him [up].[58]

God works through our weaknesses, failures and shame and can still use this unimposing vessel for God's glory. In Christ, our suffering can lead us to spread the Gospel about God's unending love and grace. The purpose is to tell others about the treasure that is in these jars of clay, the gospel about God's unending love and grace that

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[56] Plummer, Alfred, *The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians* (Edinburgh, UK: T&T Clark Limited, 1915), 43.

[57] Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 219.

[58] Garland, *2 Corinthians,* 229.

continues to save us from complete destruction. We know that Christ died for our sins, suffered and rose victorious from the grave. Our purpose as believers is to encourage, edify, uplift, comfort, console, share, and to love one another as we journey through the valley of the shadow of death.

If God's definitive salvific act occurred through the power of the crucified Jesus being resurrected in victory over death, then it should be no surprise that the saving gospel of the crucified Jesus should reach all through the weakness of his messengers.[59] The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in us. God's power becomes more evident through suffering, makes suffering bearable and victory attainable!

We will not escape tribulation in this life but it gives new meaning to suffering. We have our own cross to bear and we are resurrected to a new life for Christ's sake. Although our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. Our faith gets stronger through each adversity with the knowledge that God will rise up and deliver us. This is the promise as Christ's death brought us life, so Christ's resurrection makes possible the life to come.[60] We are grounded in the certainty of a final outcome: our resurrection after death, firmly based on Christ's resurrection, and what can be called an eternal gathering of all Christians with Jesus in the presence of God.[61]

The Apostle Paul understands himself to be intimately joined to other Christians.[62] We all suffer together. Those who suffer are not any less in God's eyes. We

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[59] Richard Bauckham, "Weakness—Paul's and Ours," *Themelios* 7.3 (April 1982), 5.

[60] Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 219.

[61] Murray J. Harris, "The Eschatological Outlook in 2 Corinthians 4:7-15, in Bieringer and Lambrecht," *The New International Great Testament Commentary*, J. Lambrecht, ed., (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005), 348.

[62] Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 236.

are witnesses of God's power within us as we stand together as witnesses to the Risen Christ. With this thought in mind, the Apostle's goal in his Corinthian correspondence was to create this sense of bonding and community, as they were prone to see themselves as individuals, economically and religiously self-sufficient, and only minimally interdependent with other believers.[63] When we speak the truth in love, as Paul did to the Corinthians, the goal is to bring others to the saving knowledge of God Almighty and God's grace that is available to everyone. We are called to live in community and in communion with our God as we journey through our trials together. We are made whole and stronger in Christ as One Body. The Apostle Paul expresses his confidence that his suffering is for the glory of God, that it is temporary, that it affects the renewal of the inner person, and that God is preparing an eternal abundance of glory beyond all measure for him (and other Christians). He has set his sights on eternal, invisible realities.[64]

In this last section, the emphasis is not to be discouraged or lose heart or give up on life when problems arise. In spite of any shameful conditions or events of disgrace or disappointment we are not to "draw in [our] horns," and "[become] timid," but to boldly preach an unveiled gospel despite our distress.[65] We are to remember that even though this earthen vessel is broken and wasting away, our inner connection with Christ is always being renewed day by day. We cannot measure the degree of our faith by the amount of problems that crop up in our life because the world we live in is a fallen world, full of sinful people and events. However, within our fragile earthen vessel there is a divine power, a treasure that transforms us into the likeness of Christ. As [our] outward

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[63] Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 236.

[64] Harris, *The New International Great Testament Commentary*, 238.

[65] Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 219.

life conforms ever more closely to the crucified Christ, [our] inward life conforms ever more closely to the glorified Christ.[66]

Therefore, hold on and believe that things we suffer here on earth may have an effect on us physically, emotionally, financially and at times spiritually, but our hope is in God and our resurrection into a new, victorious life. Most people who cross your path will not see how many times you have faced 'death' and 'resurrection' through the various trials in your life. But keep in mind that death has no power over those who believe. Scripture says, "If God is for us - who can be against us?"[67] Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.[68]

Second Corinthians 4: 17 re-emphasizes that the present tribulation that is brief in comparison to what God has for us in the glorious future. The author D.E. Garland says:

> Implicit in this statement is Paul's belief that God is working through this trouble, not in spite of it, to bring about the eternal abundance of glory in us. We are not to fix our eyes, as a conclusion (an all ending event) from what precedes but only on what will come after. What God has in store is greater than we can ever imagine. We can only see the 'greater' through the eyes of faith. Spiritual transformation cannot be documented in a laboratory with empirical experiments any more than the truth of the resurrection can be proven scientifically. To believe that God raised Christ from the dead after such a shameful death requires extraordinary faith. To believe that God will do the same for Christ's followers who are conformed to Christ's death requires just as much faith, since all the outward evidence suggests otherwise.[69]

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[66] Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 241-242.

[67] Romans 8: 31

[68] Romans 8: 38

[69] Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 244.

Therefore, don't give up because of worldly problems. We are like the clay in the potter's hand being molded through our experiences on this earth. Our lives, both in mind, body and spirit, are fragile. We can be driven this way and that way because of our weakness and sin that tempts us in every direction. Our lives are affected and afflicted by events not of our own doing, yet we are not crushed, not driven to despair, not forsaken by God, nor are we destroyed. Through Christ's power, within our earthen vessels, there is this treasure within us that is renewing us day by day giving us the power to transform our lives into something greater. We need to focus our eyes on the reality of Christ within us. The victories we have demonstrate the power we have and our witness is a powerful instrument to show others how we have overcome all sorts of situations the power of the Holy Spirit.

In the study of these two scriptures we are encouraged to hold on to our faith in the midst of devastating circumstances. We may be driven this way and that way by the wiles of this world but through the power of the Holy Spirit we are able to stand and withstand all sorts of trials and temptations. We have the ability to rise above any situation through faith in Jesus Christ. This precious treasure we have within us helps us to rise to victory and transform our lives into a new creation. The ultimate source of this treasure is God Almighty. Therefore, we stand encouraged knowing that God is ultimately in control, that we are the evidence of His new creation as God is working in us to transform us from glory to glory. We are to continue to walk by faith and not by sight, trusting that we are "a work in progress." All of God's promises are 'yes' and 'Amen' as we move toward reconciliation to God and one another. Likewise, God is reconciling the world unto God's self.

As I look back over my life and the ups and downs I have experienced I realize that my faith in God to raise me up to higher ground is oh so true! Just as we are climbing Jacob's ladder, every event, every experience – both good and bad – pushes us closer to that heavenly goal. I once was lost but now I am found by the knowledge that all things work together for good for those who love the Lord. I have had good times and bad times. Many of my enemies God has conquered and put under my feet. I know now that as I journey this road with Christ the road I walk on is holy ground I cannot complain.

I pray, with the leading of the Holy Spirit, that my project and thesis entitled 'Return from Exile: Bringing Awareness to Childhood Sexual Abuse and Recovery' will demonstrate to the population I serve of the realization that God is our Strong Tower.

Our own personal history and the documented history of childhood sexual abuse in the world demonstrates that knowledge of the extent, physiological and emotional trauma, despite race, background, religious experience and cultural upbringing there is hope in the midst of despair. With God's help we can, once again, transform our lives trusting in the Lord for deliverance and rejoice in being made whole once again accomplishing all that God has called us to do! Rise up!!

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

Historically Americans, especially church folk, don't want to talk about sex and especially not about sexual abuse of children. Accordingly, when we hear about sexual abuse, it tends to be through whispered gossip. Childhood sexual abuse is like a real hideous monster with many claws that lives in our own congregation.[1] How many folks who greet the pastor every Sunday sit in the pews with silent and painful memories of sexual abuse? Our God is One who does not sit in silence. Our God is One who speaks light into the darkness. Men and women who were abused as children should be encouraged to tell their story in a place of safety. In the beginning, God created the world through spoken words and we were created in the image of a God who speaks.[2] There is hope and healing available when your story is given a voice. We are called to "love one another as I [Jesus] have loved you" (John 13: 34). We are called to bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6: 2). When a person willingly violates the innocence of a child, it can result in intense pain and deep wounding of the soul that continues into that child's adulthood. The victim may, at that point in life, be incapable of any feelings of joy or

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[1] Len Hedges-Goettl, Daniel G. Bagby, ed., *Sexual Abuse: Pastoral Responses* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 12.

[2] Diane Mandt Langberg*, On the Threshold of Hope* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 1999), 36.

peace of mind. The healing process is a holistic process; a journey into wholeness for the inner child.

This paper will explore the issue of childhood sexual abuse historically in the world, in the United States and in the western and eastern religious philosophies. This paper will also touch on how this type of sexual abuse has been handled in the Bible and in other non-Christian religious texts. In addition, the paper will discuss how this issue is being addressed in the 21st century and what avenues of healing are available to those who have been abused.

The History of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Since the beginning of time childhood sexual abuse and maltreatment has been generally accepted as the 'status quo'. While most societal norms disapprove, the reality is "it happens" and the common response is to ignore or hide the problem. The humanity of a child as an individual with certain rights has been ignored in secular and ecclesiastical settings until recent history. It will require courage for society to make social changes and provide better treatment for the innocent victims. Children are to be loved and valued. Scripture informs us, "Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb, a reward" (Psalm 127: 3). Our knowledge of the past can help correct and solve the problems of the future while without it, we are doomed to repeat our mistakes.

Berrick and Gilbert in *With Best of Intentions* refers to the history of child sexual abuse stating, "From young victims of ancient Greece to child prostitutes in modern

society, the sexual exploitation of children has a long, dark history."[3] Notable documents recount the explicit history of maltreatment and sexual exploitation of children.

700 BCE:	Children equal to inanimate objects. The *Patria Potestas* law: A father has the supreme right to sell, mutilate, or destroy his children.
1st Cen. CE	Children nearly equal to animals. *Gynaecology* published: suggested "selective" infanticide.
2nd-15th Cen.	Children trained like animals. From Plutarch to Pepys, including "Christian" remembrance of "Innocents' Day," public whipping.
16th Cen.	Children were considered an 'economic resource'. Doctrine of *laborare es orare*: Work is worship versus Rousseau – "Speak less of the duties of children and more of their rights."
18th-19th Cen.	Children are humans with rights (but an economic burden). Laws regarding child labor and corporal punishment established.
19th Cen.	Children are emotional assets to be valued. Nuclear family promotes privacy; Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals files the first suit on behalf of an abused child (1873).
20th Cen.	Children are persons to be protected. 1906: Thomas Rotch uses X-rays to document abuse; 1962 – C. Henry Kempe discusses "The Battered Child Syndrome"; 1974 – National Center for Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN) established; 1980 – Child Welfare Act.[4]

It is apparent that before the 1980s little attention was paid to the issue of sexual abuse.

The American Humane Association nationally collects reports of childhood sexual abuse on a regular basis.[5] This data is just a drop in the bucket of the occurrences

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[3] Jill Duerr Berrick and Neil Gilbert, *With the Best of Intentions: The Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Movement* (New York and London: The Guilford Press,1991), 1.

[4] Hedges-Goettl, and Bagby, *Sexual Abuse*, 19.

[5] Mark L. Rosenberg and Mary Ann Fenley, eds., *Violence in America: A Public Health Approach* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1991), 81.

and types of child abuse and neglect. Data collection should be broadened to include data from hospitals, child-care centers and religious institutions. In this way, we may be able to get a more comprehensive view of the type and a qualitative number of incidences reported to various agencies both in the United States and worldwide.

Clinical Psychology Review published a study in 2009 from the University of Barcelona called: "Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse in Community and Student Samples: A Meta-Analysis" to deal with the relative lack of consistent data on child sexual abuse. This report analyzed sixty-five research studies across twenty-two countries to estimate an "overall international figure for such abuse" and found:

> The highest prevalence rate of child sexual abuse geographically was found in Africa (34.4%). Europe showed the lowest prevalence rate (9.2%). America and Asia had prevalence rates between 10.1% and 23.9%. South Africa has the highest prevalence rates for both men (60.9%) and women (43.7%). Jordan presents the second-highest prevalence rate for men (27%), followed by Tanzania (25%). Rates between 10% and 20% are reported for males in Israel (15.7%), Spain (13.4%), Australia (13%) and Costa Rica (12.8%), while the remaining countries all have prevalence rates below 10%. For women, seven countries reported prevalence rates above 20%: Australia (37.8%), Costa Rica (32.2%), Tanzania (31.0%), Israel (30.7%), Sweden (28.1%), the United States (25.3%) and Switzerland (24.2%).[6]

The World Health Organization found, "in armed conflict and refugee settings, girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, exploitation and abuse by combatants, security forces, members of their communities, aid workers and others."[7] In April 2014, the Nigerian Islamist group Boko Haram abducted two hundred seventy-six girls from a school in Chibok; they had been raped, tortured and psychologically abused, forced into

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[6] "Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse in Community and Student Samples: A Meta-Analysis," Clinical Psychology Review, accessed May 13, 2015 http://journalistsresource.org/studies/government/criminal-justice/global-prevalence-child-sexual-abuse#sthash.VsJNKRKg.dpuf.

[7] "Child Maltreatment," World Health Organization (WHO) Media center December 2014, Accessed May 13, 2015. http://www.Who.int.

marriage and religious conversion.[8] Unfortunately, in times of violent uprisings, physical and sexual abuse is aimed towards the most vulnerable of all populations, namely women and children. This is an area of deep concern, because this particular population had no viable resources or shelters available to enable their safety.

The church and religious institutions have also been guilty of childhood sexual abuse. This behavior is not limited to the Catholic Church, but to all denominations and faiths. Jewish, Muslim, Protestant and other faiths have condoned this immoral activity towards children by either ignoring or excusing the abuse.

A study done by Roy Speckhardt, entitled "*The Religious Sex Abuse Epidemic"* found the following:

> "In several Hasidic Jewish communities young boys were routinely abused at religious schools and community gatherings. These children weren't able to come forward with their allegations for years because they feared being cast out from the religious community for accusing one of their "holy" leaders of such a despicable crime. In Pakistan there are many allegations regarding sexual abuse of children in Islamic religious schools called *madrassas*; however, this abuse of children is not widely discussed by the victims, as the religious community routinely shuns those who come forward and "dishonor" their religious leaders. In Texas, the same situation occurred in 2011 with the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, whose leaders were accused of widespread sexual abuse of children. American Southern Baptist churches also suffer from the same problem, as a bishop in 2010 was recently accused of abusing a group of young boys in his mega-church in Georgia."[9]

The darkness of child sexual abuse clothed under the veil of religion needs to be uncovered by proper action from investigative and law enforcement agencies. The clerics and youth workers of religious institutions should not be immune to inquiry and

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[8] "Boko Haram abductees tell of forced marriage, rape, torture and abuse," *The Guardian*: winner of the Pulitzer Prize 2014, accessed May 13, 2015. http://www.theguardian.com.

[9] Roy Speckhardt, "The Religious Sex Abuse Epidemic," American Humanist Association. *The Blog*, Updated 12/18/2011 5:12 a.m., accessed May 13, 2015, www.huffingtonpost.com/roy-speckhardt/religious-sex-abuse-epidemic_b_1008805.html.

necessary trial, if such actions are deemed necessary. In addition, part of religious instruction of children should also include what is moral and immoral, and right and wrong actions as far as affection given by religious leaders and their members. Jesus said to allow the children to come to him, but Jesus did not say to molest or take advantage of the children.

Girls are usually the focus on childhood sexual abuse, but one in six boys in the United States have experienced sexual abuse before turning 18.[10] While both male and female sexual abuse victims struggle with shame and stigma, [cultural] stereotypes about masculinity often force men to wrestle with unique issues of male sexuality.[11]

Elizabeth Saewyc, a professor of nursing at the University of British Columbia who helps create individualized programs for the treatment of abused children, states, "Males, especially as children and youth, are less likely to disclose abuse, because a lot of our stories about men is that they're sort of in charge sexually, when there is sexual abuse it really undercuts all of our social scripts…it is not only a violation of a boy's boundaries and their most personal autonomy, that biggest right to privacy of the self, but it also contradicts their sense of masculinity."[12] This is an issue that needs to be addressed in a very specific way to meet the needs of the individual rather than lumping childhood sexual abuse victims into the same category. Furthermore, a training needs to be done on

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[10] Joanna Schroeder (January 6, 2016), "The secret lives of male sex abuse" Accessed February 1, 2017, https://thedevelopmentset.com/for-male-survivors-healing-through-chat-77132a56dc6f#.7rjix29nw

[11] Stephanie Pappas (February 17, 2011). "Male victims of sexual abuse face unique challenges." Accessed February 1, 2015, http://www.livescience.com/12909-senator-scott-brown-male-sexual-abuse-stigma.html

[12] Pappas, "Male victims of sexual abuse face unique challenges."

the differing aspects of how childhood sexual abuse is viewed, recognized and treated depending on your culture and ethnicity.

In the United States school system there has been a social movement to prevent childhood sexual abuse based on the ideology of empowerment of children through curriculum given each year to school aged children. Berrick and Gilbert state, "it is the responsibility of family and community and counselors and pastors to be aware and sensitive to this growing issue and stay actively attuned to various emotions, psychological and spiritual fluctuations in moods and beliefs to protect its most vulnerable members."[13]

An example of a pro-active platform was 'The Empowerment of Children' program developed at the Northern California CAP Training Center, which launched a campaign and task force to empower children and to teach them through a Preschool Curriculum:

- The abstract concept of "body ownership" (your body is your private property);
- Demonstration through models or media that explain which specific parts of touching that are "safe/unsafe, good/bad or confusing";
- Teaching 'physical self-defense' to preschoolers;
- Teaching them to 'get away' or run away';
- Teaching them the concept of secrets;
- Teaching preschoolers to 'trust their feelings' as a way to avoid abusive situations;

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[13] Berrick and Gilbert, *With the Best of Intentions*, vii.

- Understanding the concepts of 'fault and blame'.[14]

This is a fine example of a pro-active measure to protect society's most vulnerable, by providing guidelines to empower the innocent victims who may not be aware of the dangers lurking in the darkness.

The National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect defines sexual abuse as: "contacts or inter-actions [physical or verbal] between a child and an adult when the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of that adult or of another person."[15] Berrick and Gilbert make a very important point about the impact of sexual abuse in the child's adult life stating, "The severity of the impact depends on several factors – ranging from the nature of the specific nature of the act – from unwanted kisses, fondling, molestation, nudity (exhibitionistic acts) to the extreme of actual rape."[16] In addition, the relationship between the abused and the abuser plays a major part in the level of harm.[17] If a child does not want to be picked up, handled or cuddled – a child has the right to say, 'no' and not just succumb to the authority of an adult, no matter what the relationship is between the adult and child.

The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church's stance on sexual abuse is:

> Violent, disrespectful, or abusive sexual expressions [that] do not confirm sexuality as God's good gift. We reject all sexual expressions that damage the humanity God has given us as birthright, and we affirm only that sexual expression that enhances that same humanity. We believe that sexual relations where one or both partners are exploitative, abusive, or promiscuous are beyond the parameters of acceptable Christian behavior and are ultimately destructive to

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[14] Berrick and Gilbert, *With the Best of Intentions*, 28-29.

[15] Margaret O. Hyde, *Sexual Abuse: Let's Talk About It,* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1987), 49.

[16] Berrick and Gilbert, *With the Best of Intentions*, 5.

[17] Berrick and Gilbert, *With the Best of Intentions,* 5.

> individuals, families, and the social order. We deplore all forms of the commercialization and exploitation of sex, with their consequent cheapening and degradation of human personality. To lose freedom and be sold by someone else for sexual purposes is a form of slavery, and we denounce such business and support the abused and their right to freedom. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation or use of children by adults and encourage efforts to hold perpetrators legally and financially responsible. We call for the establishment of adequate protective services, guidance, and counseling opportunities for children thus abused.[18]

Throughout my years as a pastor, I have heard numerous stories of childhood sexual abuse that resulted in damaged psyches, physical stresses and emotional detachment from healthy relationships between adults. The trauma is life long and may evidence itself in many different ways: psychological, emotional, physical and spiritual. The body, the mind, the psyche and the emotions are all tied together in us as human beings.[19] We function as a total being, not as pieces functioning independently of one another. Individuals who have experienced the wounds of sexual abuse often sit silently unable to experience the fullness and joy of God's healing loving-kindness. The cry for help remains unheeded because of suppressed anger, shame, guilt and many other trauma-related issues.

The writer feels it is important that clergy, church leaders and educators be informed and aware of the symptoms and indicators that point to prior sexual abuse and become an active conduit towards healing deep wounds leading to restoration and wholeness of the individual. Wherever God's grace is present there is always hope for redemption, hope of restoration, hope to become whole once more and return from exile and resurrect a new life that God ordained for you (Jeremiah 29: 11).

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[18] *Social Principles of The United Methodist Church 2013-2016 Paragraph 161 H,* (Washington, D.C.: The United Methodist Publishing House in cooperation with the General Board of Church & Society, 2013), 24.

[19] Langberg*, On the Threshold of Hope,* 150.

The Imago Deo and Hesed

The opening pages of *When Children Suffer,* gives us a visual of God's love shown as, "a picture hung on the wall of a shepherd rescuing a lamb from the clutches of a lion and binding its wounds: the shepherd motif is a reminder of God's loving-kindness (*hesed*)."[20]

Genesis 1: 27 states, "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." We are children of the light; children born in God's loving-kindness (*hesed*). God offers love to all; however love, should not be misconstrued as sexual advances towards an innocent or unwilling victim. What type of love would that mean to the one being abused? How would this connect with the abuser who is made in the *Imago Dei*? In Genesis 2, God gave humankind the ability to care, cultivate and control the created world. In *Mending the Soul*, author Steven R. Tracy says a dichotomy may arise when scripture is perverted stating: "We can now see the beauty in God's charge to creation, but also the misrepresentation to some of the power to dominate rather than nurture and care for [it]."[21] The writer of the Gospel of Matthew warns of the sin of abusing little ones (Matt. 18: 6).

Sexual abuse is spiritual and physical warfare (Eph. 6: 10-18). God's Word says we are to be sober and vigilant, ready to defend ourselves from Satan's attacks (1 Peter 5: 8). We are to comfort the oppressed (Ecc. 4: 1). Those who practice sexual immorality will be thrown into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 21: 8). Those who take advantage of the innocent will see justice in the eyes of both earthly authorities and the Lord.

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[20] Andrew D. Lester, ed., *When Children Suffer: A Sourcebook for Ministry with Children in Crisis* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1987), 9.

[21] Steven R. Tracy, *Mending the Soul: Understanding and Healing Abuse* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 25.

Defining Childhood Sexual Abuse

Author Diane Mandt Langberg in *On the Threshold of Hope* writes, "Sexual abuse is whenever an older or more powerful person, for the satisfaction of the abuser's needs, sexually exploits a person, child or adult."[22] Rosenbert and Fenley further defines sexual abuse as, "verbal, visual or physical sexual assault, which is considered a felony; in addition, criminal laws also include a mixture of rape, statutory rape, sodomy, indecent liberties and incest.[23] This definition can expand to include touching, hair stroking and even picking up a child when the child is not wanting this type of affection. Any affection expressed, whether between blood relatives, marriage, professional and personal friends, babysitters, teachers, even peers, *if inappropriate*, constitutes sexual abuse.[24]

Rosenberg and Fenley, *Violence in America* authors, have observed specific behavior patterns seen in male abusers:

- Need for domination,
- Unusual sexual arousal patterns,
- Histories of victimization,
- Conflicts in adult heterosexual relationships,
- Drinking and drug problems.[25]

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[22] Langberg*, On the Threshold of Hope,* 48.

[23] Rosenberg and Fenley, *Violence in America*, 81.

[24] Rosenberg and Fenley, *Violence in America,* 80.

[25] Rosenberg and Fenley, *Violence in America,* 81.

The concept of sexual abuse is broad and reaches into many different venues you would not normally expect to find it, like religious institutions that bear the responsibility of upholding moral authority.

Sexual trauma can affect every aspect of the lives of the abuser and the victim. For the abuser, it can mean conviction for a crime. For the victim, it can mean being silenced and unable to describe what happened.[26] Silencing of the victim can be caused by intimidation or by psychological trauma, and will be discussed further on in this paper.

In the nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries, adult men would frequently marry girls in their young teens. Would this constitute child sexual abuse? The answer is 'yes'. From Biblical to contemporary times, religious and cultural traditions in third-world countries and in certain religious sects and cults in America, have offered young virgins to older men through arranged "marriages." This type of arrangement would be construed as childhood sexual abuse, also known as "statutory" rape which Merriam-Webster defines as "the crime of having sex with someone who is younger than an age specified by law.".

For the sake of this paper the definition of a 'child' is a person up to the age of eighteen. Many state laws modify the age of the victim in their "rape" statutes. Statutory rape, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) definition is, "rape, without force including intercourse and genital touching."[27] Child prostitution and distribution of child pornography is also considered child sexual abuse.[28] Phyllis Kilbourn did a study on street children and found, "Commercial sexual exploitation of children is the most

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[26] Hedges-Goettl and Bagby, *Sexual Abuse,* 22.

[27] Hedges-Goettl and Bagby, *Sexual Abuse,* 80.

[28] Rosenberg and Fenley, *Sexual Abuse,* 81.

hazardous form of child abuse that endangers the child's mental and physical health and undermines all aspects of their development."[29] In addition, the writer feels that children also involved in modeling competitions and/or beauty pageants can be exploited sexually. Usually pageants involve an evaluation of talent, poise (the ability to answer questions), and the modeling of casual sportswear. However, when childlren are pressured by adults to model sexually suggestive outfits while wearing adult levels of makeup, it could be considered as child sexual abuse because the child is treated as "show property" rather than humans with emotions and feelings.

Because of the failure to recognize the value of human life in today's society, many believe life is expendable and free to exploit for profit in the area of human trafficking. Years ago, I met a church member whose outreach ministry had to do with searching out and eliminating human trafficking, as well as providing healing for victims of sexual slavery. Many of these children were runaways who had been snatched off the streets. They had lost contact with family and friends and succumbed to the evil devices of their abusers. Humantrafficking.org states, "Over 2.4 million people across the globe are victims and exploited as sexual slaves."[30]

Many believe if there is no direct relationship between the abuser and the abused, it is easier to take advantage of the child because there is no familial connections to get in the way. To the contrary, if there is a familial connection, the abuser can inflict even more psychological and emotional damage to the victim because of the relationship. Furthermore, the more aggravating and continued the occurrence of sexual abuse the

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[29] Phyllis Kilbourn, ed., *Street Children: A guide to effective Ministry* (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1997), 27.

[30] "A Web Resource for Combating Human Trafficking," Humantrafficking.org. April 04, 2012, Accessed May 13, 2015, http://www.humantrafficking.org.

more the child will begin to think the abuse is normal.[31] The child may begin to welcome the abuser in the sexual act because it has become a normal routine for the child. The younger the abuse begins the more likely the child will see this as normal behavior.

David B. Peters states, "there are misconceptions about the profile of the sexual abuser, such as: they are violent, which is not true because there tends to be a very loving and supportive relationship between the abuser and the victim; also another misconception is that the abuser is mentally ill – again this is not true – less than ten percent can be classified as 'mentally ill'."[32] In addition, Peters states, "another misunderstanding is that the molester is a 'monster'; however, these people may be considered 'fine, upstanding citizens' such as: scout leaders, teachers, church youth group workers and respected professionals including officers of the law, doctors and attorneys."[33] Furthermore, a perverted mind will think because a child likes to be cuddled or is openly affectionate, is because the child actually wants sex.[34]

PTSD or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder can be a result of childhood sexual abuse. PTSD is not just limited to war injuries or some other devastating event in one's life. Diane Mandt-Langberg states, "Sexual abuse is traumatic and the label Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can apply along with other issues of anger and self-loathing."[35] Trauma is from the Greek word for wound. Just as physical trauma can cause suffering by wounding and disabling the body, a psychological trauma can cause suffering by

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[31] Park, *From Hurt to Healing,* 3.

[32] David B. Peters, *A Betrayal of Innocence: What Everyone Should Know About Child Sexual Abuse* (Waco, TX: Word Book Publisher, 1986), 21.

[33] Peters, *A Betrayal of Innocence*, 21.

[34] Peters, *A Betrayal of Innocence*, 22.

[35] Langberg*, On the Threshold of Hope,* 51.

overwhelming thoughts and feelings, a feeling of estrangement from others, a diminished decline in activities and increasing distrust of people.[36] There is also embarrassment, guilt, shame, or even self-blame in having 'placed' themselves in a compromising position or the wearing what is considered as 'seductive' clothing. Many times there are societal 'voices' that through print, media and music confirm these beliefs that humiliate the victim even more.

Childhood sexual abuse can also damage a person's faith in God. If the victim cries out to God and the abuse does not stop, it can seem that God does not care. In scripture, the prophet cries out, "How long, O LORD, will I call for help, And You will not hear? I cry out to You, 'Violence!' Yet You do not save" (Habakkuk 1: 2).

Traumatic events from divorce or an abusive marriage can put children at risk of PTSD and make them vulnerable to sexual abuse. Studies by Rosenberg and Fenley have found, "children whose parents are absent, unavailable, or in conflict, and children who have step-parents or poor relationships with their parents appear to be at higher risk for sexual abuse in all racial or socioeconomic groups."[37] PTSD suffered because of sexual abuse is treated in similar ways to other trauma-related experiences. It is important that the clergyperson or counselor be sensitive to the extent of the psychological damage and make referral to the proper agencies if they are not specifically trained to counsel in these areas. PTSD can continue for years, especially if the victim is not identified and

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[36] Andrew J. Weaver, Laura T. Flannelly and John D. Preston, *Counseling Survivors of Traumatic Events: A Handbook for Pastors and Other Helping Professionals* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 19.

[37] Rosenberg and Fenley, *Violence in America,* 79.

counseled effectively by a compassionate person who will listen and allow the victim to express their feelings.[38]

Emotional and/or Psychological Evidence of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse in childhood can lead to promiscuity, prostitution, passivity or indifference towards life, self-hatred, self-harm and thinking you have no right over your own body.[39] Self-hate and self-harm can lead to suicidal thoughts or mutilation of one's body. Self-hate can open the door for more physical abuse by the abuser or other abusers.

Victims who have been abused feel they have been betrayed and evidence feelings of shame. Shame is a state of humiliation from what the victim considers a sinful act. The victim can experience the stages of grief as well as loss of innocence, anger, guilt and fear. Langberg goes on to say, "Sexual abuse can spiritually damage a child with feelings of betrayal, abandonment, and a feeling of being unsafe in relationships that were previously ones of trust."[40] Many are left with a feeling that God has abandoned them; and a fear that God would also abuse and hurt them.[41] The individual's view of life grows dark from theological, spiritual and psychological confusion. A child who experiences sexual abuse is not only abused physically, but is raped of their innocence psychologically, spiritually and emotionally each and every time they encounter the

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[38] Weaver, Flannelly and Preston, *Counseling Survivors of Traumatic Events: A Handbook for Pastors and Other Helping Professionals,* 123.

[39] Langberg,*On the Threshold of Hope,* 89.

[40] Langberg, *On the Threshold of Hope,* 89.

[41] Langberg, *On the Threshold of Hope*, 130.

abuser. When cries for help are deemed unheeded by family members or God, what is left is merely the shell of a person expecting to be abused continually.

Religious ideas are involved whether or not the victim recovers from the assault and begins a journey towards healing. Many adult women who have been abused as children apply their religious beliefs and teachings to the assault. Many women have believed that God sent their suffering and the result was a twisted theology and their faith in God was damaged.[42] As pastors and counselors we do not want to be part of the abuse by condoning the abuse as part of God's will. Pastors need to correct this type of theological confusion about suffering. If we are not clear in our theology and infer that suffering should be accepted as a means of becoming like Christ, then we are endorsing [sexual] violence as a vehicle for Christian character development.[43]

As an advocate in a rape crisis center over twenty years ago, the writer monitored telephone calls from a range of victims– some very young who were dealing with emotions, physical concerns, spiritual despondency, psychological issues, family troubles, medical problems, legal problems and even some who were considering suicide. Child sexual abuse is more common that we dare to believe. It happens in places and within respectable families – even our own. As pastors and counselors are called to walk with those who are suffering, the challenge is how to be an advocate for the innocent and help them journey towards healing.

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[42] Nancy Eileen Nienhuis. "Theological Reflections on Violence and Abuse*". The Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling: Vol 59, Nos. 1-2 Spring-Summer 2005,* 111.

[43] Nienhuis, *The Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling,* 111.

Return to Wholeness

The prophet Isaiah says we will build up the ancient ruins and raise up former devastations; repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations (Isaiah 61: 4). This is the hope and cry of victory over past abuses. Such abuses have haunted the lives of many who have suffered years of shame. They do not even realize they are capable of joy and peace in their lives. Many who have not recovered from childhood sexual abuse relive the effects of the abuse as an adult everyday. Childhood sexual abuse counteracts and stifles growth into a healthy adult. Adults who were molested as children have emotional, spiritual and psychological baggage that carries over in their adult lives, and into the sexual portion of their marriage.[44]

In David B. Peters book, *A Betrayal of Innocence*, he tells the story of an adult whose sexual abuse as a child carried over into her adult years:

> Judy finds out that her husband of eight years had been sexually molesting her fourteen year-old daughter, which he vehemently denied. Judy is confused and in pain as she has flashbacks and nightmares about her own molestation by her own father. Her world is falling apart. Judy grew up middle class in the foothills of California. On the outside, her family seemed to be well adjusted and 'normal'. Parents had a stable marriage and the family was actively involved in church – a family who attended church regularly and held leadership positions. Things were not as they appeared. The abuse started as touching when she was six then to full intercourse when she was ten. Her father told her this is what mommies and daddies do and he wanted to prepare her for marriage. With her mother always working at night Judy became the 'wife' at night. When she began dating she gained the reputation of being promiscuous because she only knew how to relate to males on a sexual basis. She never told her mother what happened because of the hurt it might result and possible the breakup of the family. Twenty-eight years have passed and it is still as fresh as yesterday. Now she is faced with the same situation in her own family. Most people would not believe this story, especially because it was a Christian family. Judy had kept her own abuse and now her daughter's abuse a secret because of her socio-economic Christian status.[45]

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[44] Peters, *A Betrayal of Innocence,* 15.

[45] Peters, *A Betrayal of Innocence*, 11.

Scholar Emma J. Justes, in her book *Please Don't Tell,* states this type of secret is called a *shameful secret* which is defined as something kept hidden or unexplained, out of public view and permeated with shame even for generations.[46] In this story, this was the secret locked in shame while the family attempted to protect their reputation that led to the next generation perpetuating the abuse.

The Graduate School of Psychology at Fuller Theological Seminary also conducted a survey of pastors and Christian counselors which found that the majority of sexual abuse victims were Christian middle to upper middle class females who were sexually abused by their biological fathers regularly which began well before they were fourteen and that more than one child was sexually abused.[47]

Years ago, the writer volunteered to fold bulletins at a church. She remembers speaking to a well-dressed eighty-year-old woman, who was also folding bulletins. In conversation, the woman casually mentioned how her father had sexual intercourse with each of his eight daughters on a regular basis. He convinced them this was the right thing to do because he was teaching them about marriage. The abuse stopped when each of them reached sixteen. This woman died the following week after the conversation. Many stories of abuse go to the grave with the victims but this woman had a chance to tell hers.

This confirms what David B. Peters found in his study that child sexual abuse in our nation cuts across all geographic, cultural [racial], economic, social and religious

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[46] Emma J. Justes, *Please Don't Tell: What to Do with the Secrets People Share* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2014), 4.

[47] Peters, *A Betrayal of Innocence*, 20.

boundaries; and many occurrences of molestation are never reported to the authorities or to the child's parents.[48]

Religion and Psychology

Many victims suffer guilt from past childhood sexual abuse. Berrick and Gilbert state, "Most signs of dysfunction into adulthood include responses of guilt, anxiety, anger, depression and shame…a profound sense of loss and extreme abuse exhibits as aggression, suicidal ideation and self-mutilation."[49] Furthermore, childhood sexual abuse has an impact on sexuality as adults either by promiscuous behavior, confusion regarding their sexual identity or trying to hide their sexuality.[50] Through observation these are questions we should ask when a child seems to be 'acting-out' or they seem 'not to be themselves'. It is important that we do not just brush any change in personality as growing pains or female hormonal changes. There might be something deeper going on and questions that need to be asked.

Guilt has to do with religion and the psyche.[51] Guilt is when a person feels they have shared in the violation of what was done to them. In other words, they feel responsible for the abuse. Theological guilt involves a violation [intentional or inflicted onto the victim] of the divine standards and laws of God.[52] Anger towards self and others is also a response to pattern of sexual abuse during childhood. Anger can be damaging to

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[48] Peters, *A Betrayal of Innocence*, 14.

[49] Berrick and Gilbert, *With Best Intentions,* 5.

[50] Berrick, and Gilbert, *With Best Intentions,* 5.

[51] Gary R. Collins*, Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1980), 116.

[52] Collins*, Christian Counseling*, 117.

self and to others and provides an open door for Satan. Eph. 4: 26 says, "Do not sin and do not let the sun go down on your anger." Guilt is intensified when the victim is told he or she was the reason they were violated – in other words, it was their fault.

Shame, the other consequence of childhood sexual abuse, is characterized by loss of credibility, loss of grace, loss of honor, and also, perhaps most important, loss of control."[53] The evidence of shame is hiding or avoidance for fear of being found out or exposing 'darkness' that exists in the family. This type of shame causes a loss of identity of who you were. A child who is sexually abused is no longer a child – he or she sees him or herself as different from the other children. The innocence is no longer present and the child can no longer share stories like other children because they were told 'not to tell anyone'. Other tendencies are a lack of joy, feeling life is a burden, a lack of spontaneity, the need to be responsible for others, not caring for his or her own needs, avoiding of conflict because of the lack of ability to stand up for him or herself and indifference to life.[54]

Theologian Paul Tillich's connects theology to pastoral counseling because of his association of Christian salvation with healing, and his sensitivity to psychotherapy.[55] Exploring feelings such as anger, shame, or guilt with the help of medications to help reduce the anxiety, depression and insomnia often experienced by victims (especially with PTSD) are necessary for complete healing of the victim.[56] Hedges-Goettl and Bagby

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[53] Justes, *Please Don't Tell,* 80.

[54] Laura DeLaplain, *Cutting a New Path: Helping Survivors of Childhood Domestic Trauma* (Cleveland, OH: United Church Press, 1997), 3.

[55] John B. Cobb, Jr., *Theology and Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1946), 3.

[56] Weaver, Flannelly and Preston, *Counseling Survivors of Traumatic Events,* 125.

state, "Victims of PTSD may experience nightmares, flashbacks, unexplained physical sensations, and paranoia, delusions about others or other symptoms that may appear psychotic, when all that is happening is a reliving of the abuse event."[57]

We are admonished by the Word to bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6: 2). What a wonderful chance to walk with someone and listen to someone who bears the burden of sexual abuse. A part of being sensitive to the victim and being a vessel to healing is to listen to the story and connect it to present reality. A pastor or counselor equipped with the proper listening skills allows the victim to hear him or herself speak about the incident(s), which can lift the burden of shame and guilt and lead to recovery and healing.[58] Listening with non-judgmental sincerity shows compassion and understanding. As we listen, we also become exposed to our own vulnerability because of the transparency of what is being shared and we enter the sacred place with the victim. Only God can heal the hurt as God hears the cry of the wounded. The Lord is near to the brokenhearted; and saves those who are crushed in spirit (Psalm 34: 18).

Conclusion

A return from exile to wholeness is healing for the physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual body. Wholeness gives you the power to accept your past as part of who you are in Christ. Wholeness gives you the power to say 'no' to the suffering of the present and 'yes' to redemption. Because someone suffers they should not be

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[57] Hedges-Goettl and Bagby, *Sexual Abuse,* 80.

[58] Justes, *Please Don't Tell,* 80.

labeled as "emotionally weak" or "mentally ill."[59] Jesus Christ suffered abuse, rejection, pain and wounding, but he rose in victory leaving the suffering behind.

Hope addresses the future. It tells us that we can be hopeful for the future rather than being shaped by our past. We are new creatures in Christ (2 Cor. 5: 17). God promises a future of hope and prosperity (Jer. 29: 11). A return to wholeness realizes that through the power of the Holy Spirit we can take responsibility for shaping our future. We are no longer bound to the past.

Christian parents, Christian adults who were molested as children and Christian counselors must play a part in the journey towards healing and in being pro-active in prevention.[60] As parents we need to be aware of the dangers facing our children every day and in every place. We need to educate our children and ourselves to recognize and confront any type of unwanted sexual advances and teach our children and teenagers to say 'no' and take ownership of their bodies. As parents and pastors we need to be aware that childhood sexual abuse can happen anywhere, even in the 'safety' of religious institutions. Our children need to know that everyone is not their 'friend' and 'secrets' can harm.

Both pastors and Christians have the unique opportunity of offering healing in families who suffer by forgiveness, acceptance and love for all involved.[61] We, as pastors, are called to counsel our parishioners when the need arises. However, as counselors and pastors, we also need to recognize our frustration and limitations with people we are counseling who might have multiple and severe problems but do not seem to respond to

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[59] Weaver, Flannelly and Preston, *Counseling Survivors of Traumatic Events,* 19.

[60] Peters, *A Betrayal of Innocence,*15.

[61] Peters, *A Betrayal of Innocence,* 20.

even the most intense counseling; in addition to recognizing the indicators of previous sexual abuse and treating the client in a way which will promote healing rather than causing further damage by referral to a more intense psychiatric dialog.[62]

Gary R. Collins, in *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide,* sums it up:

> Our model for counseling is Jesus Christ who is our example of love, compassion and understanding to hurting individuals. Jesus listened, taught, encouraged, supported, confronted and challenged. But Jesus also demanded repentance, obedience and action. Jesus was also committed to serving his heavenly Father and his fellow human beings. The Apostle Paul wrote, "Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. (Romans 15: 1). The church is also part of the healing community who cares for each other and non-believers outside of the Body of Christ.[63]

John B. Cobb pulls theology and pastoral care together stating, "When the Christian faith gives pastors an assurance of God's grace and of the meaningfulness of life, this assurance is subtly communicated to their counselees; and when belief in God leads to assurance that no one is beyond redemption, the pastor may have hope where other counselors despair.[64]

In addition, part of the assurance of God's grace and the meaningfulness of life is to face the reality and speak of what has happened in the past. As in Alice Walker's novel, *The Color Purple*:

> Celie, the black heroine, only begins to recover from her traumatic experiences of incest/rape, domestic violence, and marital rape when she is able to tell her story, to be open and honest. Reading fictional narratives where black female characters break through silences and speak the truth of their lives, to give testimony, has helped individual [black] women take the risk to openly share painful experiences…Yet many black readers of Alice Walker's fiction were angered by Celie's story. They sought to "punish" Walker by denouncing the work, suggesting it represented a betrayal of blackness…And yet there is no healing in

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[62] Peters, *A Betrayal of Innocence,* 15.

[63] Collins*, Christian Counseling,* 14-16.

[64] Cobb, *Theology and Pastoral Care,* 3.

> silence. Collective [black] healing can take place only when we face [that] reality."[65]

In the final analysis theologically, God is with us despite dire circumstances. The Bible encourages a Christian response for over-coming our many woes. The Holy Spirit guides us to examine our life and reflect on what God is doing in our life. In Phil. 4: 4-6 we are instructed not to be anxious about anything and to rejoice in the Lord in all circumstances. Through the presence of the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ promises many things to us…joy, peace, a comforter who will always be with us. We are not to be troubled or fearful, and we are encouraged to pray at all times and to trust in God. If we are able to reconcile our experiences with our spiritual journey with God, we may be able to heal from our wounds and reconcile with the God whom we worship.

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[65] Toinette M. Eugene and James Newton Poling, *Balm for Gilead: Pastoral Care for African American Families Experiencing Abuse* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 73.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Theology is viewed through the lens of our historical past, present and hope for the future. The theology of the Christian faith must be interpreted according to where we are located in time and our life experiences. Theology and spirituality [are] subjective and objective; personal and social.[1] Theology breathes as the Holy Spirit breathes life into us. Theology requires deep reflection on what God is doing, how God's will applies to our life, and how God's wisdom impacts and directs not only our society but our worship of the One True God. This leads us to have faith in a Holy God for the future, even when our past lies in ruins. Theologian Anselm says, theology is fluid and ever moving as the Holy Spirit guides us while we try to reach understanding of the God we worship[2] even in the midst of deep spiritual woundedness.

The writer proposes that a foundation of well-defined forgiveness is the key to rebuilding a victim's present despite their past. The theological concepts of grace and hope will enable the writer's project to provide a healing environment for those wounded by childhood sexual abuse. Sexual trauma experienced as a child may require revisiting past experiences so that the victims can lead lives of redemption and renewal. Just as

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[1] Owen C. Thomas and Ellen K. Wondra, *Introduction to Theology*. "Each person is immersed in their social location: gender, race, class, age, ability, sexual orientation" (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2002), 6.

[2] Thomas Williams, *Anselm Basic Writings, Cur Deus Homo 1.1,* (Indianapolis, IN, Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2007), x.

Jesus experienced the suffering of the cross on our behalf, the ultimate goal was that we might experience the joy of the resurrection with Him. Even though a [complete] new life may not be possible for the victim, what is left is how to survive with what remains in the aftermath of violence.[3]

The theology of forgiveness dominates the Christian faith and gives power back to the adult victim of childhood sexual abuse so they may choose to forgive. Forgiveness is prominent throughout Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. Jesus Christ suffered as an innocent victim of undeserved violence crying out, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."[4] It is important to recognize that forgiveness, if not well-defined and properly applied to the situation, can become a partner in the abuse. Quoting scriptures on forgiveness out of context, and telling victims of abuse that if they do not forgive their abusers they have committed a 'sin' of unforgiveness, may do more damage to the person already struggling with their worth in God's eyes. Building on this framework, the concept of forgiveness has three distinct models: judicial (removal of guilt by confession), psychological (letting go and extending grace to the offender) and relational (restoring the relationship).[5] Any, or all, of these models can be applied to the situation of childhood sexual abuse. The theology of forgiveness in Scripture is complex. There are examples of forgiveness without qualification; forgiveness contingent upon the

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[3] Shelly Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 7.

[4] Luke 23: 34

[5] Steven R. Tracy, "Sexual Abuse and Forgiveness," Journal of Psychology & Theology, 27 no 3 Fall 1999, 219, 221-223.

repentance of the offender, unlimited forgiveness and forgiveness not given to evil people.[6]

Aware of the broad scope of forgiveness, this project will address the issues of childhood sexual abuse through workshops, counseling sessions, and healing services with the hope that through the presence of the Holy Spirit those who have been victimized by childhood sexual abuse will be open to the healing touch of God. The project will demonstrate that forgiveness as it relates to childhood sexual abuse is more than letting go and forgetting about the event. If that were the case, it would make the feelings of the abused and their need for reconciliation and retstored trust inconsequential. Realistically, the abused victim has every reason to hate, mistrust and hang on to any negative feelings about the abuser. What the victim has experienced will never be 'okay'. Forgiveness may not be possible because of the memory of deep pain of the abuse resulting in woundedness, shame and hopelessness. Authors Bass and Davis, in *The Courage to Heal,* state that forgiveness is not essential for healing.[7] Healing and a return to wholeness can be attained through the ability to re-connect spiritually with a loving God through the presence of the Holy Spirit who helps the victim re-integrate his or her self back into community and rebuild a relationship with God.[8] The victim must feel safe and no longer experience the effects of abuse.

The deeply wounded psyche of a child does not know how to deal with sexual maltreatment. In the past, children who came to their parents or other adult guardians

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[6] Tracy, "Sexual Abuse and Forgiveness," 221.

[7] Ellen Bass and Laura Davis, *The Courage to Heal: A guide for women survivors of child sexual abuse,* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 348.

[8] Andrew J. Schmutzer, *"Spiritual Formation and Sexual Abuse: Embodiment, Community, and Healing,"* Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care Vol.2(1) (2009):70, accessed October 26, 2015.

were taught to bury any unpleasant memories. Some of the stories many children told about being molested were disregarded as untrue or a product of an active imagination. The pain of unresolved abuse weaves in and out of all aspects of the child's growing up years into adulthood affecting relationships, emotions, and spirituality. The project will address a population of individuals who suffer with shame and guilt that dis-allows them to trust God and worship God freely. The project will open the door of knowledge and deliverance through the theology of deep woundedness (Han) and allow the Holy Spirit to heal and restore through the presence of God's grace. The goal is to bring awareness to congregations and church leaders of the extent of childhood sexual abuse and educate ministry leaders about the spiritual, psychological, emotional and physical manifestations for those sexually abused as a child. This deep wound may also manifest itself as a trans-crisis state or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).[9]

It is important for church leaders, as well as church membership, to understand the profound crisis of faith connected to sexual abuse, especially childhood sexual abuse. The journal article *Spiritual Formation and Sexual Abuse: Embodiment, Community, and Healing* suggests that sexual abuse is a theological trauma that can outlast any psychological damage and surface as collateral injury in how adults view God as their protector. It is hard for those on the outside to understand what victims have endured and why most continue to suffer in this vortex of shame and guilt. The article states that standard patterns of grieving do not easily fit into the abuse category because those who have been sexually abused focus on self-loathing, the sociology of power and ignore faith

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[9] Roslyn A. Karaban, "Crisis Caring: A Guide to Ministering to People in Crisis," Power Point Presentation by Sharon Ellis Davis, Pastoral Care and Counseling, United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio, October 15, 2015.

as being part of the healing process.[10] The role of the church is to provide healing by way of spiritual growth and recovery programs for victims of abuse. The church can also help victims return to wholeness by processing their resentment towards God for allowing this to happen to them. Church leaders and members of the congregation can help by being part of a community support system in the church, small group sessions and outside support groups that understand the theology of deep woundedness (Han)[11] and the issue of how sin is viewed under the guise of 'Han'.

In the church, the abused can find hope, liberation from the past and restored spiritual wholeness through a journey from abuse to deliverance. They are no longer in exile but free from any bondage that entangles the victim's life. Those who have been sinned against feel there is no road to salvation from their past. Most of the time the pastor deals with sinners who can be diagnosed and prescribed spiritual medicine to free the sinner from the wages of death.[12] However, pastors and counselors can be confronted with a different kind of person who has been sinned against and suffers spiritual injury from sexual abuse. In the Christian faith, those who have been sinned against may feel they have no way back to God and no path to deliverance because they were the victims – the ones who were sinned against. There are communities of psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors, advocate groups and governmental agencies, but there is no theological road laid out for victims leading to restoration, healing and reconciliation back to God. The victim is left to spiritually suffer alone unless the church opens the door and becomes a

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[10] Schmutzer. *"Spiritual Formation and Sexual Abuse."*

[11] Andrew Sung Park, *From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 3.

[12] Romans 6: 23

vehicle to restorative justice where the offended receives healing or deliverance from their oppression through Jesus Christ.[13]

Secrets play a major part in the experience of those who have been sexually abused as children. When they were abused, they were told not to tell. Now, as adults they are ashamed to tell what happened to them as children. Listening to stories and hearing confessions of past events leads towards healing of the victim. However, listening to stories of abuse can be difficult. For the person sharing, there can be a great deal of fear that God will disappoint them once more if their confessions fall on deaf ears. The ministry of presence is very important to allow the victim to tell their story and re-live the emotional event. Listening and hearing are different because sexual issues can be troublesome and uncomfortable for the listener who can disengage from the secret being told. Confidentiality is expected, with the exception of instances when the victim is suggesting to do harm to his or her self or to another person. If this becomes apparent to the listener, then the appropriate authorities need to be contacted. The listener must know and be secure in his or her own life story and not project their own story into the victim's story. The listener must understand the importance of boundaries in order to provide the feeling of safety that the victim requires.[14] Listening can be a means of grace to the victim.

Preaching, workshops and the re-telling of the biblical accounts can open up the door for the victim to become aware of God's grace being just as real and available to them as it is in the lives of those mentioned in the Bible. The biblical narrative can also

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[13] Park, *From Hurt to Healing*, 104.

[14] Emma J. Justes, *Please Don't Tell: What to Do with the Secrets People Share* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2014), 19.

enhance self-image by the recognition that we are all created in the image of God and that God is love. Abuse tears apart the wholeness of the person because it tears out and dismantles what is intimately connected to the larger fullness of the one-ness with God.[15]

The ability for the victim to ask the question, 'Why did God allow this to happen to me?' opens up the door to liberation. The question allows God to answer through presence, prayer and worship. The question also reminds the victim that God and the community of faith stand together with them through their pain.[16] The Holy Spirit remains with the victim by journeying through the pain as he or she reflects on Scripture and prayer. The reading of poetry and narratives of individuals, who suffered 'Han' or deep woundedness can then emerge victorious with the ability to re-build former devastations and be released from the pain.

If the victims of deep pain woundedness (Han) continue to bear the memory of unresolved oppression, humiliation, and violation, it can result in rage against self or others if their situations do not change.[17] Many people are able to cope and go on to live productive lives by living in denial. However, this type of denial undercuts the fullness of a life well lived to the glory of God. There is no room for forgiveness because to forgive they would have to admit that they were abused. They live a life of dryness without spiritual power and a life without much faith because they feel God has disappointed them in the past. They may try to live their life solely using their own power rather than relying on the power of the Holy Spirit. In other words, denial does not give a realistic view of their former life and may offer a skewed view of self and life in general. Those

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[15] Schmutzer. *"Spiritual Formation and Sexual Abuse"*

[16] Karaban, "Crisis Caring" Power Point.

[17] Park, *From Hurt to Healing*, 33.

who have had experiences of childhood sexual abuse have a distorted perception of 'normality' in a sexual relationship. As adults the images of romance, flowers and music can be confusing to the victim because they were denied the pleasure of being a willing participant in the act of sexual contact. Sex becomes equated with something that someone else does to you, not something about which you have any choice.[18] Many people feel powerless because of the humiliation of sexual abuse and consider powerlessness normal. The writer can relate to feeling humiliated and powerless because her first sexual encounter as a teenager was not an act of romance but an act of pain, devoid of any pleasure that left her confused, revolted, disgusted and questioning the sexual act itself. This continued into her first marriage as sex was something done to her that gave no pleasure but only physical and psychological anxiety and angst.

Healing can be accomplished when the victim chooses to release the chains of sexual abuse that entangles him or her. This does not always involve forgiveness or forgetting the event. However, a decision must be made not to allow the past to dominate the present and the future. This change of mind gives power back to the victim who had power taken from him or her during the abuse. When power is given back to the victim, he or she chooses to forgive rather than being shamed into forgiving the abuser. This change of mind may allow the victim to recognize the humanity of the abuser (that they are made in the Image of God), yet what he or she did is a distortion of who he or she was created to be.[19] By God's grace, honest reflection, prayer, worship and communication can lead to an experience of freedom from the past.

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[18] Marie M. Fortune, *Love Does No Harm: Sexual Ethics for the Rest of Us* (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, Inc., 2006), 27.

[19] Fortune, *Love Does No Harm*, 166.

Each of the four biblical gospels depicts the execution of Jesus Christ. Yet, Jesus saw beyond the suffering and rose above the dark depths of the grave with power and victory in his hands. The author Marie Fortune recounts the event:

> [The Crucifixion] is a situation where Jesus has no power; he is speaking from a cross about those who have crucified him. What is noticeable is that he does not forgive them. Instead, he asks his Father, he asks God, to forgive them. Having no power within the situation, he cannot forgive…This is the one place where, if Jesus wanted the weak to forgive the strong, he could have indicated it. He did not.[20]

Jesus Christ calls us to forgive seventy times seven[21] but does not forgive in the account of the Crucifixion. If we read the text closely, Jesus asks God to forgive them. This declaration is spoken during a time of weakness, as Jesus was the victim of the cruel act of cruifixion. The crux of the matter only came when Jesus rose from the dead with all power in His hand and then he was the conduit of forgiveness for all who have sinned – He was the one who offered forgiveness because he regained power. The tables were not turned and Jesus was no longer the victim but the one who forgives.

Jesus does not expect those who have less power, for example, victim/survivors, to forgive the harm done to them.[22] It is argued that only when we are in a position of power and someone with less power owes us a debt are we to forgive.[23] I agree with this position. This debt is paid only when there is restoration of the victim by way of accountablility of the abuser and emotional and spiritual recompense for the damage done to the victim has been restored. This is restorative justice through the lens of forgiveness.

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[20] Fortune, *Sexual Violence,* 167.

[21] Matthew 18: 21-22

[22] Fortune, *Sexual Violence,* 167.

[23] Fortune, *Sexual Violence,* 167.

In that sense the victim has regained power over his or her life, no longer a victim of the past, no longer vengeful and has gained the spiritual power from God to now forgive the abuser. The abuser no longer has a spiritual stronghold over the victim.

Restorative justice is a term used by the American Bar Associaton to elevate the role of crime victims and hold offenders directly accountable to the people they have violated and restore the emotional and material losses of victims by providing a range of opportunities for healing for all involved.[24] Restorative justice achieves emotional repair for the victim through processes that reduce vengefulness or increase empathy, factors that infuence a forgiveness response.[25] In otherwords, the victim voluntarily comes to see the abuser as a sinner in need of forgiveness, where the *Imago Dei* has been distorted by sin, rather than continue down the road of resentment, bitterness and hostility where forgiveness is not possible. The victim now makes a conscious decision to free themselves of this negative spiritual power. Restorative justice is where justice and love meet. Very often justice and love are understood as distinct and even opposing values and aims. On the one hand, justice is commonly depicted as harsh judgment, as punishment without mercy. On the other hand, love is perceived as sentimentality where wrong-doing is simply overlooked without consequence.[26] Scripture offers a distinctive view of justice and love. Both are fundamental parts of God's character: God the righteous judge (Psalm 7:7; 2 Timothy 4:8) and God as love (1 John 4:8).

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[24] E.L. Worthington, Jr. "The Paradox of Forgiveness in Restorative Justice," Handbook of Forgiveness, University of Minnesota, Center for Restorative Justice and Peacemaking, Accessed February 1, 2017, http://fetzer.org/sites/default/files/images/Parodox_of_Forgiveness_in_RJ.pdf

[25] Worthington, "The Paradox of Forgiveness in Restorative Justice"

[26] Center for Justice and Reconciliation. http://restorativejustice.org/we-do/restorative-justice-week-bible-studies/. Accessed January 30, 2017.

The victim should not be forced or coerced to forgive someone who has violated his or her body and suffered violence to their fractured psyche until they are ready. The power is in the hands of the victim. Forgiveness may not even be psychologically possible to a survivor of childhood sexual abuse. The victim's deep woundedness and anger may be too deep for him or her to forgive and forget the abuse. Furthermore, it can further damage the survivor who may see those pushing forgiveness as part and parcel of a collective enemy who caused the abuse in the first place. When the Christian Church calls for forgiveness of the perpetrator the injured party may no longer trust those who feel they are called to help.

The early patristic writer, Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, wrote:

> [Christ] exclaimed upon the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do". Since Christ both suffered and did exculpate those who had maltreated Him. For the Word of God, who said to us "Love your enemies, and pray for those that hate you," Himself did this very thing upon the cross; loving the human race to such a degree, that He even prayed for those putting Him to death.[27]

The nature of forgiveness that has been prevalent in the Church demonstrates we are to forgive, as Christ forgave his enemies on the cross. Furthermore, as Christ has forgiven us of our sins, we are to forgive others. These are examples for Christians to follow. Forgiveness is one of the most important tenants of the Christian faith. However, the writer feels that Irenaeus' position on forgiveness did not take into account the deep woundedness of sexual assault, which shatters the psyche of the victim. The victim has not only been assaulted but the psyche emotionally and spiritually implodes. Forgiveness is not just unconditional to be tossed around without regard to the victim who had been

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[27] Translated by Alexander Roberts and William Rambaut. From Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1. Edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103318.htm>. Accessed November 6, 2015.

sinned against. Forgiveness of the one who assaulted is wrapped up in the physical, spiritual, and emotional damage of the victim. Thus, forgiveness must be well-defined as to why the victim needs to forgive in order to heal. The victim looks only to God's restorative justice being met by redemption and restoration of the life taken from him or her – saying, I am now able to forgive because I know the truth, I can speak the truth and can now live my life set free and resurrected into the fullness of the life promised to me by Christ (John 8:32).

Theologian Jurgen Moltmann makes the argument that justice for both the victim and the perpetrator is necessary for resolution, stating:

> An act of violence destroys life on both sides. The perpetrator becomes inhumane and unjust; the victim is dehumanized and deprived of his or her rights. Because violence has two sides, the road to freedom and justice has to begin with both: the liberation of the oppressed from the suffering of oppression requires the liberation of the oppressor from the injustice of oppression. Otherwise there is no liberation and no justice that can create peace. In that the goal is an open community, free of fear between people and community.[28]

I also disagree with Moltmann in this area. The victim will always remain with a memory of injustice stemming from the violation of a deeply wounded psyche even if the abused has forgiven the act. There is nothing that will make good or erase the past. The abuser may not ever recognize themselves as guilty, but the victim will always be bound knowing his or her body had been violently violated against their will.

Doctrines of forgiveness can put pressure on the victim to forgive and forget before she or he is even safe enough to evaluate the situation.[29] Again, nowhere does

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[28] Jurgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortrss Press, 2001), 133.

[29] Toinette M. Eugene and James Newton Poling, *Balm for Gilead: Pastoral Care for African American Families Experiencing Abuse* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 159.

Jesus ask victims to forgive their oppressors without justice.[30] The victim must be ready to forgive, and may even decide not to forgive. Forgiveness is an act of faith in which the victim prayerfully turns over the need for justice and redress to God, the Just Judge.[31] Forgiveness in this sense may not be liberating but causes the victim to be continually bound up in the past. The soul of the victim can be further damaged if the pastor is not responsible in handling scripture. In other words, telling an abuse survivor to honor his or her mother and father will not be effective when the one called to honor was the abuser. When a parent is sexually abusive, it is difficult to live this command out and may cause more damage than healing to the victim.

A fractured psyche and personhood can be made whole by an act of forgiveness as long as it is well-defined. The definition of Personhood must be clarified for healing to be possible. Personhood is wrapped up in the Image of God. The theology of creation as stated, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness…"[32] suggest the three-in-one concept of the Trinity. Through this imagery we see that God's Personhood lives in community as an individual, relational and spiritual Being. This Trinitarian Oneness is the image that is stamped onto our person.

Personhood: physical (self), relational (community) and transcendent (religious/God) is stamped into our psyche. Andrew J. Schmutzer states in *Spiritual Formation and Sexual Abuse* page seventy-one:

> Within the person, there is a soundness or integrity required for the interactive health of each realm. Yet these are vulnerable precincts of the person. In other words, the corporeal realm can be plundered like a garden; the social realm can be

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[30] Eugene and Poling, *Balm for Gilead*, 159.

[31] Tracy, "Sexual Abuse and Forgiveness," 226.

[32] Genesis 1: 26a

> silenced and shunned; and the spiritual domain can be poorly nurtured and utterly confused. Each are protective boundaries vital to the health and interaction of each realm.[33]

When a child suffers abuse not only is his or her body violated but the wholeness of being is shattered and depersonalized. The psyche is damaged and personhood is fractured. The sexual violation of a person results in a sense of abandonment, powerlessness, helplessness, loss, vulnerability, shame, humiliation, degradation and other elements of emotional trauma.[34] If forgiveness of the abuser is seen as a means to an end, the victim may suffer further emotional trauma and shattering of the oneness of his or her personhood. The victim can no longer turn to God or to community. He or she suffers in isolation and disintegration of self that can lead to depression and isolation. The writer proposes that only a holistic, body-soul-spirit method with a well-defined path to forgiveness can heal those fractured pieces of self together again.

Part of this well-defined path to forgiveness includes a theology of remaining and how the present emerges from its [wounded] past lured to a new possibility [of wholeness] where there may be a residue of death as life unfolds.[35] The victim is no longer exiled from society but is by faith traveling towards spiritual wholeness. Picking up the broken pieces that remain – restoring self and reclaiming the fullness of life once more. As the Holy Spirit travels with us, the Spirit breathes, witnesses, remains and lures

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[33] While I refer to realms, H.B. Lipka uses the terminology of "religious," "communal," and personal boundaries" in her helpful study, Sexual Transgression in the Hebrew Bible, eds., D.J.A. Clines, J.C. Exum, K.W. Whitelam, HBM 7 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), 16.

[34] Hilary B. Lipka, *Sexual Transgression in the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006). 29.

[35] Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma,* 38, 57.

us to wholeness leading to a healing pathway through trauma.[36] Author Rambo quotes a survivor of Hurricane Katrina as saying 'People are telling us to get over it already. The storm is gone, but the "after the storm is always here."[37] A victim of acute pain and suffering never really comes to the fullness of self. There is always a memory of the trauma of childhood sexual abuse. Healing leading to a return to wholeness is possible, but there is always a scab that remains. This scab is similar to the symptoms of PTSD. Some of these symptoms may be sadness, difficulty sleeping, difficulty concentrating, depression, recurring thoughts, grief and avoidance.[38] These wounds still live inside and the proclamation of good news is not always possible for the victim to accept right away. Death is always present even within life, and "after the storm" is always here.

The Scriptures emphasize the power of God's grace through forgiveness, redemption, death and resurrection. When viewed through the lens of childhood sexual abuse, God's grace through the love, care and understanding of others can be the path to wholeness. As human beings, we are constantly witnessing death and birth through the endings of certain relationships and the beginnings of new relationships. This is the human experience. If we see forgiveness as a journey, rather than a means to an end to be met, it may foster the mending of a life torn apart by sexual trauma. A well-defined path to forgiveness is subjective and it is a personal choice to forgive and move on. Whether the victim chooses to forgive the abuser outright, harbor unforgiveness or lean towards forgiveness in light of a restorative tye of justice leading to a greater sense of resolution

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[36] Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 38, 57.

[37] Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 1.

[38] Raymond B. Flannery, *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: The Victim's Guide to Healing and Recovery* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001), 11.

and healing of both parties, it is up to the victim and must be well-defined. If the focus is not just on the trauma (the cross) but also on the healing of the victim (the resurrection), then pieces of brokenness can be collected, examined, and a choice made whether to hold on to the memory and grow from it or release the pain. The victim can put it away or to hold on to it, until he or she is able to release the pain.

Many times survivors of childhood sexual abuse ask, 'Where was God while I suffered?' Childhood sexual abuse is an effective weapon Satan uses to destroy someone's life. Satan comes to steal, kill and destroy. Victims may fall into the dark abyss of destructive habits, suicidal thoughts, bitterness, self-hate, rebellion against authority figures, and have a hatred towards God for not saving them. It is normal to be angry towards God. As the survivor learns to forgive God, he or she may realize God is also angered and grieved by childhood sexual abuse. This may help them to receive the love of God and integrate into community life once more. It was not the will of God that hurt the victim but it was the will of the abuser. As the victim journeys this road there is a need for compassion, love, understanding and encouragement focusing on what he or she can gleam from the pain rather than allowing the pain to control his or her life. Healing and the return to wholeness is an intentional choice.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Spiritual woundedness is but one result of childhood sexual abuse. The victim also suffers psychologically, socially and exhibits behavioral indicators, for example, alcoholism, drug addiction or promiscuity. The disciplines of psychology, psychiatry, behavioral psychology, and social psychology, concur that victims of childhood sexual abuse (CSA) can also exhibit symptons of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The term childhood sexual abuse has varying definitions in criminal justice, child protection and clinical settings, but generally refers to a range of sexual behaviors, including sexual touching, attempted or completed sexual penetration and sexual exploitation, committed against a child or adolescent under the age of eighteen.

This paper starts with the premise that shame and guilt can result from a deep woundedness of the psyche of individuals who have been victims of childhood sexual abuse. Literature will be presented that examines how issues of shame and guilt in ministry practice are handled. In addition, this paper will examine how listening skills, compassion, social support systems and religious institutions can facilitate healing and provide support for victims. This paper will also explore how childhood sexual abuse has not been adequately addressed from the psychological perspective resulting in the ongoing suffering of the victim. There is a need for more education and support systems in sacred and secular institutions. The prevalence and societal acceptance of childhood

sexual abuse from the ancient world up until the mid-twentieth century and beyond needs to be explored and discussed openly in a public forum.

Merriam-Webster dictionary defines shame as a painful emotion caused by consciousness of guilt, shortcoming or impropriety.[1]

> [Furthermore, shame is the desire] to deny or hide one's self from family and friends for fear they will be found out. It is a state in which the whole self feels damaged and defective, as a result of a perceived failure to meet social and self-imposed standards.[2]

In Marie M. Fortune's *'Sexual Violence: The Sin Revisited*, she states:

> "Shame" is politically incorrect these days, particularly in mental health circles, and a critique is certainly in order. For too long, shame has been used against those who have less power in our communities: rape victims, gays and lesbians, teenage mothers…. You should not feel ashamed if you were raped, if you are gay or lesbian, [or] if you gave birth to a child outside of marriage….[3]

The American Psychological Association defines psychology as:

> The study of the mind and behavior. The discipline embraces all aspects of the human experience — from the functions of the brain, to the actions of nations; from child development, to the care of the elderly. In every conceivable setting, from scientific research centers, to the health care setting, to the workplace the understanding of behavior is the enterprise of psychologists.[4]

In this theoretical paper, 'guilt and shame' will be defined as a psychological construct by society that has effectively stigmatized victims seen as guilty of sexual

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[1] Shame. Accessed November 19, 2013 7:07 pm, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/shame.

[2] Candice Feiring and Lynn S. Taska, "The Persistence of Shame Following Sexual Abuse: A Longitudinal Look at Risk and Recovery," *Child Maltreatment* November 2005 10: 337-349, accessed December 3, 2015, doi:10.1177/1077559505276686

[3] Marie M. Fortune, *Sexual Violence: The Sin Revisited* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2005), 115-116.

[4] "*This is Psychology: What is psychology?"* American Psychological Association, CEO Norman B. Anderson, PhD, accessed December 3, 2015*,* http://www.apa.org/research/action/this-is-psychology/introduction.aspx.

indiscretion, and blamed for the assault or ongoing abuse.[5] This modern day construct tends to keep the victim/survivor bound up in the past involving feelings of hopelessness and self-condemnation. In addition, long-term spiritual functioning in adult Christian women who have been sexually abused as children demonstrated significantly lower spirituality in these areas: a sense of being loved and accepted by God, a sense of community with others, and trust in God's plan and purpose for the future.[6] Today, these attitudes still run deep and are also held by the victim/survivors; they have feelings of guilt and shame and do not want anyone to know [their story].[7]

Shame, is a consequence of childhood sexual abuse characterized by loss of credibility, loss of grace, loss of honor, and also, perhaps most important, loss of control.[8] The evidence of shame is hiding or avoidance for fear of being found out or exposing 'darkness' that exists in the family. The writer identifies this type of shame as a loss of identity. A child who is sexually abused is no longer a child – he or she sees him or herself as different from the other children. The innocence is no longer present and the child can no longer share stories like other children because they were told 'not to tell anyone'. Other tendencies are a lack of joy, feeling life is a burden, a lack of spontaneity, the need to be responsible for others, not caring for his or her personal needs, avoiding of

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[5] Fortune, *Sexual Violence*, 145.

[6] Terese A. Hall, "Spiritual Effects of Childhood Sexual Abuse in Adult Christian Women," Journal of Psychology and Theology, 1995, Vol. 23. No. 2, 129-134

[7] Fortune, *Sexual Violence*, 145.

[8] Emma J. Justes, *Please Don't Tell: What to Do with the Secrets People Share* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2014), 80.

conflict because of the lack of ability to stand up for him or herself and indifference to life.[9]

In *Healing the Incest Wound: Adult Survivors in Therapy*, author Christine A. Courtois expounds on numerous psychological clinical reports that typically identify anxiety, depression, low self-esteem and relational difficulties as psychological symptoms associated with childhood sexual abuse.[10] Social problems which correlate with childhood sexual abuse trauma include: conflict resolution, interpersonal sensitivity, adult attachment issues, feelings of isolation and stigma, social alienation, difficulty trusting others, child social relationship problems, relational imbalances, intimacy, tendencies toward re-victimization, personality, unstable personal relationships, the victim-perpetrator cycle, social introversion and violence.[11] One study by Edwards and Donaldson of one-hundred and four female incest survivors showed seven "stress response themes": (a) vulnerability and isolation, (b) fear and anxiety, (c) guilt and shame, (d) anger and betrayal, (e) angry reaction to the abuser, (f) sadness and loss, and (g) powerlessness.[12] Throughout the writer's years as a pastor, she has heard numerous stories of childhood sexual abuse that resulted in damaged psyches, physical stresses and emotional detachment from healthy relationships between adults. The trauma is life long

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[9] Laura DeLaplain, *Cutting a New Path: Helping Survivors of Childhood Domestic Trauma* (Cleveland, OH: United Church Press, 1997), 3.

[10] Terese A. Hall, "Spiritual Effects of Childhood Sexual Abuse in Adult Christian Women," Journal of Psychology and Theology, 1995, Vol. 23. No. 2. 129, quoting Christine A. Courtois, *Healing the Incest Wound: Adult Survivors in Therapy*, Second Edition (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010).

[11] Neil D. Brick, *How Childhood Sexual Abuse Affects Interpersonal Relationships,* Accessed December 9, 2015. https://ritualabuse.us/research/sexual-abuse/how-childhood-sexual-abuse-affects-interpersonal relationships/.

[12] P.W. Edwards and M.A. Donaldson, "Assessment of symptoms in adult survivors of incest: A factor analytic study of the responses to childhood incest questionnaire," *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 13, (1988), 101-110.

and may evidence itself in many different ways: psychological, emotional, physical and spiritual. The body, the mind, the psyche and the emotions are all tied together in us as human beings.[13] We function as a total being, not as pieces functioning independently of one another. Individuals who have experienced the wounds of sexual abuse often suffer alone with no one to share their story of abuse because of his or her embarrassment. The cry for help remains unheeded because of suppressed anger, shame, guilt and many other trauma related issues. The writer was not able to share her 'true' story of her first love because the trauma of her first sexual encounter brought shame and guilt leading to sadness, loss and isolation from her family and friends.

Trust is a major factor that affects many social relationships the victim may encounter. In *Healing the Incest Wound: Adult Survivors in Therapy*, Christine A. Courtois indicates:

> Survivors have a marked impairment in the ability to relate to and to trust others. This is due to the betrayal inherent in the act of incest. The other difficulties a child may have include relating sexually to others, due to conditioning. The child may also experience 'parentified' behavior, where the child acts older than their years and needs to take care of others in the family. The child's social functioning may include the development of cognitive problems, which may affect social relationships and their behavior in school. As an adult, the survivor may believe they can't trust anyone, since they couldn't trust their family.[14]

In an article, *Healing from Childhood Sexual Abuse: A Theoretical Model* research shows in women, sexual abuse is associated with poor health status, functional

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[13] Diane Mandt Langberg*, On the Threshold of Hope* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 1999), 150.

[14] Brick, "*How Childhood Sexual Abuse Affects Interpersonal Relationships."*

disability, high utilization of health services, and a variety of physical problems, including headache and gynecological and gastrointestinal symptoms.[15]

The behavioral coping mechanisms of adults who experienced childhood sexual abuse have been studied. It was shown that:

> Coping is identified with specific types associated with negative or positive health outcomes. A theoretical and empirical review of literature on adult coping with CSA indicates that emotion-focused coping (i.e., regulating one's emotions rather than the stressor) and avoidant coping (i.e., denial of or disengaging from memories or feelings related to the stressor) used immediately following the event and over time are associated with psychological distress.[16]

Alcohol or drug addiction was another way of coping. The author, Shelly A. Wiechelt, in *The Role of Shame in Women's Recovery from Alcoholism* examined the relationship between childhood sexual abuse and the difficulty in recovery:

> Childhood sexual abuse has been identified as a factor that contributes to the development of alcoholism in women and seems to inhibit their recovery. One possible link is internalized shame. Participants who reported a history of childhood sexual abuse were compared to members who did not report a history of childhood sexual abuse on internalized shame, relapse, and social adjustment in recovery. Results showed that internalized shame appeared to be an important treatment issue for many women who were alcoholics. A high level of shame was common to women in the sample, regardless of their sexual abuse experiences during childhood. There was a strong association between internalized shame and difficulty in recovery. Women with higher shame scores had more problems with social adjustment during recovery, as well as greater likelihood of relapse. Shame scores were lower for those who were further along in recovery. The results indicated that women with alcoholism who were experiencing problematic levels of internalized shame in recovery, regardless of its origin, were at higher risk for relapse and would have reduced quality of life in recovery.[17]

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[15] Draucker, C. B., Martsolf, D. S., Roller, C., Knapik, G., Ross, R., & Stidham, A. W. (2011). "Healing from Childhood Sexual Abuse: A Theoretical Model," *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, *20*(4), 435–466, Accessed October 10, 2015, http://doi.org/10.1080/10538712.2011.588188.

[16] Draucker, et. al, "Healing from Childhood Sexual Abuse," 435–466.

[17] Shelly A. Wiechelt and Ester Sales, "*The Role of Shame in Women's Recovery from Alcoholism,"* https://www.ncjrs.gov/App/Publications/abstract.aspx?ID=193647*,* accessed December 6, 2015.

Judith L. Milton in *Alcoholism Recovery and Treatment Needs of Women* informs us:

> Shame is an unacknowledged core affect that can be devastating for a female alcoholic throughout all areas of her life. It is an inner sense of being completely diminished as a person. "A moment of shame may be humiliation so painful or an indignity so profound that one feels one has been robbed of her or his dignity or exposed as basically inadequate, bad or worthy of rejection" (Fossum & Mason, 1986, p. 5).[18]

As we try to assist victims in overcoming the memory and trauma of childhood sexual abuse our aim is to do no harm. Chapter seven in *Introduction to Psychology and Counseling* states that memory plays a significant role in physical as well as intellectual activity and is the basic component of human wholeness.[19] Healthy self-esteem is wrapped up in self-love and seeing yourself worthy in God's eyes. Lack of self-worth is the basis of most psychological problems.[20] If a person has traumatic memories of his or her childhood psychological problems may remain dormant until later on in life, or the adult may not recall specific childhood events that causes exaggerated reactions.[21] In order to do no harm in counseling survivors of childhood sexual abuse it starts at the point of disclosure.[22] Listening skills are an important element in healing and possible forgiveness for the survivor's mental health. It is important that clergy and counselors take care in accessing the situation to avoid further trauma.

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[18] Judith L. Milton, *Alcoholism Recovery and Treatment needs of Women*, cited Fossum, M. A., & Mason, M. J. (1986). *Facing shame,* (New York, NY, W. W. Norton & Company).

[19] Paul D. Meier, Frank B. Minirth, Frank B. Wichern, Donald E. Ratcliff, *Introduction to Psychology and Counseling, Second Edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1991), 125.

[20] Meier, et.al., *Introduction to Psychology and Counseling,* 143.

[21] Meier, et. al., *Introduction to Psychology and Counseling,* 273.

[22] "Recovering from Childhood Sexual Abuse: a theoretical framework for practice and research," *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*, volume 21 number 1, February 2014, 69-78.

Many victims also suffer guilt from past childhood sexual abuse. Childhood sexual abuse is not just characterized as incest or child exploitation, slavery or prostitution. It can also include date rape and statutory rape especially if the victim is not of the age of consent (usually eighteen) and the assailant is an adult. In these instances, the female victim is usually less assertive, is openly trusting, wants very much to be accepted and the experience goes unreported because the victim is ashamed and unaware of what to do.[23] This is the result of the writer's personal experience wherein she did not know what to do and because of her shame, she did not initially tell her mother. When her secret was revealed by her pregnancy the result was rejection by her mother and family and years of isolation from family and friends.

Valuable insight is given in the book, *With the Best of Intentions* by Berrick and Gilbert who state, "most signs of dysfunction into adulthood include responses of guilt, anxiety, anger, depression and shame…a profound sense of loss and extreme abuse exhibits as aggression, suicidal ideation and self-mutilation.[24] Furthermore, child sexual abuse has an impact on adult sexuality either by promiscuous behavior, sexual identity confusion or trying to hide their sexuality.[25] Gentle questions should be asked when a child is observed to be 'acting-out' or they seem 'not to be themselves'. It is important that we do not just brush any change in personality as growing pains or hormonal changes. There might be something deeper going on that needs to be investigated.

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[23] Raymond B. Flannery, *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: The Victim's Guide to Healing and Recovery* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001), 95.

[24] Jill Duerr Berrick and Neil Gilbert, *With the Best of Intentions: The Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Movement* (New York and London, The Guilford Press, 1991), 5.

[25] Berrick and Gilbert, *With the Best of Intentions*, 5.

Guilt has to do with religion and the psyche.[26] Guilt is when a person feels they have shared in the violation of what was done to them. In other words, they feel responsible for the abuse. Theological guilt involves a violation [intentional or inflicted onto the victim] of the divine standards and laws of God.[27] Anger towards self and others is also a response to patterns of sexual abuse during childhood. Anger can be damaging to self and to others.

In the introduction of *Theology and Pastoral Care* the author connects theology to pastoral counseling. The author points to theologian Paul Tillich because of his association of Christian salvation with healing and his sensitivity to the importance of psychotherapy to aid in healing.[28] Exploring feelings such as anger, shame, or guilt with the help of medications to help reduce the anxiety, depression and insomnia often experienced by victims (especially PTSD) are necessary for complete healing of the victim.[29]

Psychologists over the years discovered that Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder doesn't confine itself strictly to the war experience. The American Psychiatric Association defines PTSD as:

> A psychiatric disorder that can occur in people who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event such as a natural disaster, a serious accident, a terrorist act, war/combat, rape or other violent personal assault. A person with PTSD, however, [may have] symptoms last for at least a month and often persist for months and sometimes years. Many individuals develop symptoms within

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[26] Gary R. Collins, *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1980), 116.

[27] Collins, *Christian Counseling*, 117.

[28] John B. Cobb, *Theology and Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1946), 3.

[29] Andrew J. Weaver, Laura T. Flannelly and John D. Preston, *Counseling Survivors of Traumatic Events: A Handbook for Pastors and Other Helping Professionals* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 125.

> three months of the trauma, but symptoms may appear later. For people with PTSD the symptoms cause significant distress or problems functioning. PTSD often occurs with other related conditions, such as depression, substance use, memory problems and other physical and mental health problems. [30]

In addition to the symptoms of PTSD is Psychological Trauma. Psychological Trauma and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder have inter-related symptoms.

Psychological Trauma is the state of severe fright that we experience when we are confronted with a sudden, unexpected, potential life-threatening event over which we have no control, and to which we are unable to respond effectively no matter how hard we try.[31] Psychological Trauma victims can be in acute crisis for a period of time. Generally, victims return back to normal when the fear is lessened, mastery is restored and the trauma has passed.[32]

However, with PTSD victims the symptoms continue to haunt them. Andreas Maercker in "*A Socio-interpersonal Perspective on PTSD: The Case for Environment and Interpersonal Processes,*" states:

> Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a common reaction to traumatic experiences. We propose a socio-interpersonal model of PTSD that complements existing models of post-traumatic memory processes or neurobiological changes. The model adds an interpersonal perspective to explain responses to traumatic stress. The framework draws from lifespan psychology, cultural psychology and research into close relationships and groups. Additionally, clinical knowledge about PTSD is incorporated. This involves knowledge about shame, guilt, estrangement feelings and protective factors, such as social support and forgiveness.[33]

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[30] "*What is PTSD?"* American Psychiatric Association, http://www.psychiatry.org/. Accessed Dec 8, 2015 20:05:58 GMT.

[31] Flannery, *Counseling Survivors of Traumatic Events*, 7

[32] Flannery, *Counseling Survivors of Traumatic Events*, 7.

[33] Andreas Maercker and Andrea B. Horn, "*A Socio-interpersonal Perspective on PTSD: The Case for Environment and Interpersonal Processes,*" (June 2012): 465-81, accessed December 9, 2015, DOI:10.1002/ccp.185.

Many of the physical symptoms involve physiological distress such as hyper-vigilance, exaggerated startle response, sleep disturbances, difficulty concentrating, mood irritability, anger problems, poor memory, inability to shut off past memories, avoidance grief, guilt, loss of interest in activities and numbing of emotions.[34] In addition, in *Sexual Abuse: Pastoral Responses*, Hedges-Goettl and Bagby share that some may experience nightmares, flashbacks, unexplained physical sensations, and paranoia and delusions about others or other symptoms that may appear psychotic, when all that is happening is a reliving of the abuse event.[35]

Surprisingly, there has been little research on the relationship of psychology, religion and sexual abuse. One writer, Diana E. H. Russell, in her book, *The Secret Trauma*, did a study to examine the negative relationship between victimization, religious practice having to do with faith in God and the inherent goodness of creation.[36] God images convey the concepts of love and authority similar to how parents are viewed by their children. The study found the responses of survivors ranged from anger at God to a feeling that God was and is still distant when compared to non-survivors.[37] The study also indicated that many actual survivors felt God was ashamed of them.[38]

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[34] Flannery, *Counseling Survivors of Traumatic Events* 11.

[35] Len Hedges-Goettl and Daniel G. Bagby, ed., *Sexual Abuse: Pastoral Responses* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 80.

[36] Diane E. H. Russell, *The Secret Trauma: Incest in the lives of girls and women* (New York: NY Basic Books, Inc., 1986), 119.

[37] Donna Kane, Sharon E. Cheston and Joanne Greer "Perceptions of God by Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse: An exploratory Study in an Under-researched Area," *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 1993, Volume 21, No. 3, 235.

[38] Kane, et. al., "Perceptions of God by Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse," 236.

The relationship between how God is seen and recovery from trauma depends on whether God is seen as a forgiving or a condemning deity. These concepts of God are developed in early childhood by parental authority. Subjects were asked if they feel or felt that God was disapproving or approving, permissive or rigid during their childhood, adolescence and as adults.[39] The research showed many abused women did leave the church, but some stayed in their original denomination because of the need for spiritual coping rather than religion.[40] The writer left the church for fifteen years. She returned to the church when at the age of thirty-three she took back control of her life and finally left and divorced her husband.

A theoretical model done by Draucker, et. al informs us:

> In Judeo-Christian populations, self-directed spiritual coping (i.e., self-initiative, no help from God), active surrender (i.e., handing control to God), and passive deferral (i.e., waiting for God to control situation) by survivors of CSA are associated with anxiety (Gall, 2006). Spiritual discontent (i.e., anger and dissatisfaction with God over the situation) is associated with greater levels of depressed mood, whereas active surrender and religious forgiveness (i.e., seeking God's help in letting go of negative emotions) are related to lower levels of depressed mood.[41]

Additional research finds that when victims of childhood sexual abuse are pro-active in their own healing while trying to make sense of the abuse, it improves in psychological, physical and spiritual strength: Drauker, et. al goes on to say:

> Survivors of CSA do not only cope with the negative effects with CSA but engage in dynamic processes that include growth as well as recovery. Post–traumatic growth is defined as "the individual's experience of significant positive change arising from the struggle of a major life crisis" (Calhoun et al., 2000). Adults who

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[39] Donna Kane, Sharon E. Cheston and Joanne Greer "Perceptions of God by Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse: An exploratory Study in an Under-researched Area," *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 1993, Volume 21, No. 3, 235.

[40] Kane, et. al., "Perceptions of God by Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse,"235.

[41] Draucker, et. al. "Healing from Childhood Sexual Abuse."

> experienced child abuse, for example, have identified positive change processes related to making sense of the abuse (Woodward & Joseph, 2003). Some survivors identify an inner drive toward growth and report positive changes in self-perception and new perspectives on life as a result of healing from their abuse. Such positive changes occur when they take control of the direction of their lives, experience acceptance from others, care for and nurture themselves, experience a sense of liberation and freedom, and gain a sense of accomplishment, achievement, belongingness, and connection.

The discussion below shows the importance of education and support systems in both sacred and secular institutions and how they affect adult healing from childhood sexual abuse. All participants were given adequate knowledge of childhood sexual abuse and invited to integrate the experiences into their own life story. For many this was challenging because the sexual abuse occurred in childhood or they were involved in sexual activities for which they were not prepared for [mentally or spiritually] no matter what the age.[42] The following is the full report of results of participants who 'grappled with' and then actively 'tackled' and engaged in their healing. This report is necessary to support this theoretical paper. Draucker, et. al published their findings below:

Grappling with the Effects of CSA

> Many participants continued to struggle with these questions in adulthood. Those who remain consumed by them were determined to be in the stage of *grappling with the meaning of the CSA* (referred to as the grappling stage). They were beleaguered by thoughts and memories of the CSA, remained mired in difficult life situations, and exhibited a number of psychological, behavioral, and physical symptoms. They continued to hold childhood beliefs about the CSA – typically, that it was normal, that they were to blame for it, and that it destroyed their life.

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[42] Draucker, et. al. "Healing from Childhood Sexual Abuse."

Life patterns

Participants in the grappling stage often had troubled lives that involved abuse, compromised health, and instability (Martsolf & Draucker, 2008). Many experienced ongoing maltreatment by intimate others or extra-familial violence, including physical assaults and rape. People in this stage often reported a variety of psychological, physical, and sexual health concerns (Roller et al., 2009). They often had unstable life courses that included substance abuse, lack of steady employment and stable housing, inability to maintain enduring supportive interpersonal relationships, poverty, and legal problems.

Parenting

Some participants in this stage "passed on" abuse to their children. Deprived of positive parenting, these participants were unable to create a home environment in which their children could thrive. Some physically, emotionally, or sexually abused their children or failed to protect them from molestation by others (Martsolf & Draucker, 2008). An intergenerational cycle of abuse often occurred because parents believed that child mistreatment was normal or inevitable.

Disclosure of CSA

Many participants in the grappling stage kept the CSA a secret (Draucker & Martsolf, 2008). They did not disclose the CSA because they suppressed thoughts of it, were ashamed, feared they would be blamed or disbelieved, or wished to protect the abuser or their family. Many had no supportive confidants who were willing or able to hear about the CSA. Because no one provided a new perspective on the CSA, these participants maintained their childhood understanding of it. Those who did disclose the CSA did so indirectly or indiscriminately. Some "hinted" about the CSA by mentioning it obliquely or leaving notes or diaries about it hoping someone would find them. Some disclosed the CSA but were not selective and thoughtful about whom they told and often received negative reactions of blame or disbelief, which lead to further silence.

Spirituality

While in the grappling stage, most participants did not experience a comforting or meaningful spiritual connection that facilitated their healing (Knapik et al., 2008). They did not communicate with a higher power who helped them, experience a higher power as present in their lives, or have a strong commitment to spiritual beliefs.

Altruism

Participants in the grappling stage did not often engage in altruism. They often knew others who suffered from abuse or victimization but lacked the resources to offer support or help (Stidham, 2009). In addition, they did not feel they could aid others because they continued to believe that abuse was inevitable.

Exemplar

A 62-year-old African-American woman, who was sexually abused as a child and raped as an adolescent, was in the grappling stage. She was one of thirteen children; she never felt loved by her mother and never knew her biological father. As a child, she was sexually abused by several family acquaintances and raped by a "sex offender." She had her first child at thirteen. She stated, "You know, I feel [because of the CSA] like my whole life was f'd up - period." She explained, "It really hurt me to be violated like that.... All this, all this.... Even though I am 62 years old, all this is still in my mind. It [the power of the CSA to ruin her life] never goes away" (grappling). As an adult, she had never been employed, had a long history of substance abuse, had been depressed and attempted suicide and was sexually assaulted on several occasions (living a troubled life). All three of her children were taken from her by protective services because of abuse or neglect and placed for adoption (passing on the abuse). When asked if she had revealed her CSA to anyone, she responded, "I never did tell my [step]-father because no one cared. I'll put it that way, so I never did tell nobody" (keeping the CSA a secret). Her only spiritual reference was to wonder why God would not provide anyone to love her (having no comforting spiritual connection).

Tackling the Effects of CSA

Once they figured out the meaning of the CSA, some participants engaged in a variety of processes to mitigate its long-term negative outcomes. These activities occurred in the stage of *tackling the effects* (referred to the tackling stage). In this stage, they sought psychological, psychiatric, or substance abuse treatment; ended abusive relationships; improved their physical health; made changes in their interpersonal relationships and sexual lives; and sought new occupational or educational opportunities. Although participants experienced this stage as challenging and, at times, tedious, they felt like they were doing the "work" of healing. This phase was often long, arduous, and taxing.

Enabling factors

Two factors enabled participants to move from the figuring out stage to the tackling stage. One was on-going support from others. Isolated, affirming messages were not enough; participants needed others, such as family, friends, or professional helpers, to be available during difficult times. The experience of having someone "be there for me" was foundational to making sustainable life changes. Personal resolve was also required to move into the tackling stage. Participants needed to call on their inner strength and resilience in order to tackle the effects of the CSA.

Life patterns

In this stage, participants engaged in new life patterns that included a mix of troubles and successes. Because they were still tackling the effects of the abuse, many still experienced a number of life challenges but felt their lives were "settling down" (Martsolf & Draucker, 2008). Their adult lives became more stable, healthier, and fulfilling. In the prior stage, accomplishments were infrequent and tenuous; in this stage, they were common and enduring.

Parenting

While tackling the effects of the CSA, many participants began to make changes in the way they parented their children in order to protect them from the abuse (Martsolf & Draucker, 2008). In the prior stage, they verbalized the intent to be better parents; in this stage, they made discernible attempts to be more nurturing and protective. They alerted their children to potential abuse situations, kept them away from family members who were abusive, and invited them to discuss concerns they have about abuse. Because participants in this stage were still dealing with their own problems, however, their attempts to effectively protect their children "fell short." Some were too zealous in shielding their children from adversity and failed to accurately ascertain which situations or participants realistically posed danger. For most participants, however, becoming better parents was clearly a salient concern as they tackled the effects of CSA.

Disclosure of CSA

In this stage, participants no longer disclosed their CSA as a way to understand it, but rather as a way to cement and pass on their new account of it (Draucker & Martsolf, 2008). Each time they discussed their CSA with supportive others, they became more certain it was abuse, was not their fault, and no longer had to

determine their life course. They also shared such wisdom with others who were abused, most often to convince them that they were not to blame and can heal.

Spirituality

In the tackling stage, a number of participants experienced a dynamic and directed spiritual process that facilitated their healing; they describe this as a spiritual journey (Knapik et al., 2008). Some experienced the presence of a divine being who accompanied and sustained them as they engaged in difficult recovery processes. Others experienced a sense of spiritual awakening that was integral to their healing. Some believed that healing involved overcoming the trials and tribulations that God provided for them in order to make them stronger.

Altruism

Participants in the tackling stage showed compassion to those who were abused, maltreated, or disadvantaged (Stidham, 2009). Instead of expressing general sympathy and concern for those who suffered, they provided support and encouragement to them. They believed that because they had been abused and experienced some healing, they could help others better than those who have never experienced abuse. Many planned to become involved in altruistic activities, such as joining victims' organization or speaking of their abuse in public.

Exemplar

A 49-year-old African-American woman, who had been sexually abused throughout much of childhood by an uncle, brother, and grandfather, was in the tackling phase. She was raised by her grandmother because her mother worked as a prostitute and her father had schizophrenia. She described a troubled life pattern throughout much of her adulthood. She claimed she “ran the streets” and had many sex partners. She was diagnosed with bipolar disorder but avoided psychiatrists. She always felt like a bad person and lamented the fact that she never married. She went to two beauty schools – “a White school and a Black school” – so she could do all women's hair. She established a successful business, but lost it when she became addicted to crack cocaine. She pointed to age 40 (nine years prior to the interview) as the time when she began “dealing with” her CSA. She had been writing about it, “working [it] out,” “getting [it] out,” and going to a psychiatrist and a counselor (tackling). She received drug treatment and was “clean” for two years (living a life of troubles and successes). She stated that “God, my counselor, and my psychiatrist” provided the support she needed to help her in her healing (on-going support). As a child, there was no one to whom she could disclose the abuse because her family life was so troubled. As a young adult, she tried to talk to a brother about the CSA, but he denied it, insisting they “had a good raising.” At the time of the interview, she was talking with a

> counselor about her CSA: "It's still hard to talk now, but I been doing better, since, when I first started talking about it, when I was 40, since I was really, really, healing for real." She stated that every time she talked about it, she felt a little more like it was not her fault (discussing the CSA to strengthen a new understanding). Spirituality was an integral part of her healing. She asked God to provide direction in her life: "Cause I had to ask God. I needed to ask for direction, why has my life been like this? And he showed me why... And I'm healing since 40 years old" (experiencing a spiritual journey). She realized there are "a lot of stories out there like mine" and wished all people who had been abused had someone to talk to so they "would feel normal and better" (being compassionate).
>
> In scripture we are admonished by the Word to bear one another's burdens.[43]

What a wonderful chance to walk with someone and listen to someone who bears the burden of sexual abuse. It can be a wonderful experience if we can be a part of someone's journey from recovery from childhood sexual abuse. A part of being sensitive to the victim and being a vessel to healing is to listen to the story and bring it out to the reality of the present. Knowledge is power. A pastor or counselor together with the proper listening skills allows the victim to hear him or her speak about the incident(s), which can lift the burden of shame and guilt and lead to recovery and healing.[44] Listening with non-judgmental sincerity shows compassion and understanding and brings healing. As we listen we also become exposed to our own vulnerability because of the transparency of what is being shared as we enter the sacred and painful place with the victim. Only God can heal the hurt as God hears the cry of the wounded.

The writer's theoretical foundations paper has provided new understanding that healing from childhood sexual abuse can be accomplished when theology and psychology/psychiatry work hand in hand to alleviate the suffering from shame and guilt.

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[43] Gal. 6: 2

[44] Justes, *Please Don't Tell,* 80.

The writer is convinced that the use of psychological models for recognizing behaviors, knowledge of what constitutes childhood sexual abuse, and developing compassionate listening skills, when combined with spirituality are means for reclaiming your life as an active and engaged person in the community. The writer agrees with author Marie M. Fortune who states, "For too long, shame has been used against those who have less power in our communities."[45] Victims of childhood sexual abuse are deserving to live a life well lived, free from the effects of abuse on their body and psyche. The writer feels that the community at large and the church needs to be actively involved in the process of healing through knowledge, public discussion, and advocacy for those who have been sexually abused as children.

[45] Fortune, *Sexual Violence,* 115-116.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Introduction

The results of this project demonstrated that many of us have found ourselves in bad situations from poor choices, toxic relationships or finding ourselves in surroundings where we had no control, asking ourselves how did I get here? A good majority of us leave this world wounded and broken. There is light at the end of the tunnel where we can find restoration of our soul amidst the brokenness of our life. Deep wounds can rupture our soul. However, we can rebuild our lives and rebuild our lives with a joyful heart. Many of us suffer and are still held captive from pain long ago. The question is how do the abused cope and how have they been coping with this deep dark secret? Praise be to God! The Lord is on our side to defend us, to save us and to offer us hope even amidst a city that still lies in ruins – we can still praise God with the presence and leading of the Holy Spirit.

Since the beginning of time childhood sexual abuse and maltreatment has been ignored and generally accepted as the 'status quo' on how children were treated. Up until the twentieth century children were seen as property. Psalm 127: 3 informs us to 'Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb, a reward'. What happens to us during our childhood impacts us for life. From unwanted kisses, fondling, molestation, nudity to the extreme of actual rape can damage a person's psyche for life resulting in all

sorts of psychological problems, alcohol and/or drug additions, low self-esteem, self-loathing, poor health, emotional, spiritual damage and even Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Knowledge of past sins, and the victim who was sinned against, can help and correct and solve the unseen problems of the future.

Trust is a huge issue for those who were sexually abused as children since the survivor has had a family member abuse their trust and may now find it extremely difficult to trust anyone – even God. Secrecy also plays a huge part in childhood sexual abuse. When victims were abused they were told not to tell. Now, as adults, they are ashamed to speak about what happened to them as children. Having someone listen non-judgmentally to their stories and hearing their pain expressed in their own words can be a means of healing for the abused.

A child who is sexually abused is no longer a child. Innocence is lost and he or she sees him or herself as different from the other children. The child can no longer share stories with the other children because they were told 'not to tell anyone'. While a teenager's body and hormones may be ready for sexual activity, their psyche has not matured enough to handle a sexual act and they must keep secret their feelings of shame and guilt or risk rejection or condemnation from family and peers. Feelings of self-loathing can isolate a teen, making them feel too "different" to be accepted in their social circles.

The victim who has been sinned against is no longer whole. We function as a total being not as pieces functioning independently of one another. We have been created in the *Imago Dei*. We are children of the light; born in God's loving-kindness. God offers love to all; however that love should not be misconstrued as sexual advances towards an

innocent, unknowing or unwilling victim. Individuals who have experienced the wounds of sexual abuse often sit silently suffering in the pews of the church.

Pastors and counselors have the unique opportunity of being able to offer healing in families who suffer. As pastors and counselors we are called to counsel but we also need to recognize our own life journey and our limitations with people whom we journey. Pastors and counselors have the unique opportunity of being able to offer healing to those who suffer from childhood sexual abuse but they must also recognize their own experiential limitations. As pastors and counselors our model of love, compassion and understanding is Jesus Christ. As we teach, encourage, support, confront and challenge those who come to us for counsel, we also call them to repent and and seek Holy Spirit transformation.

As Celie, the [black] heroine in Alice Walker's novel, *The Color Purple,* begins her journey, we find she is only able to recover from her traumatic experience of incest/rape, domestic violence and marital rape when she is able to tell her story, and to be open and honest… yet many [black] readers of Alice Walker's fiction were angered by her telling of Celie's story by calling it a betrayal [of blackness]….let it be known there is no healing in silence.[1] The Lord our God encourages a Christian response for over-coming our woes despite our dire circumstances. As in Philippians 4: 4-6 we are instructed not to worry, not to despair, but to rejoice in the Lord in all circumstances.

When theology, psychology and pastoral care join together in the assurance of God's grace, this assurance is subtly communicated to the ones we counsel – that no one

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[1] Toinette M. Eugene and Jame Newton Poling, *Balm for Gilead: Pastoral Care for African American Families Experiencing Abuse* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 73.

is beyond redemption. God loves us all. Shame and guilt as a result of childhood sexual abuse can be alleviated when these three disciplines work together.

The project's goal is to bring awareness to congregations and church leaders of the extent of childhood sexual abuse and the spiritual effects manifested by those who have been wounded by childhood sexual abuse. The project will identify the behavioral symptoms of childhood sexual abuse and will consist of education, discussion, narratives, evaluation and re-evaluation. It will give the history of childhood sexual abuse and fully define childhood sexual abuse.

The power of Holy Spirit will guide us to uncover pain inflicted in the past and seek wholeness and restoration. This is hard work, but with God's help, victims of CSA can embrace their past hurts and journey through the healing process with Christ.

In Galatians 5: 2 we are admonished by the Word to bear one another's burdens. My research has led me to conclude that the church and societal institutions have been negligent in addressing the issue of childhood sexual abuse. In addition, it is not necessary for the victim to forgive the abuser (which may cause more psychological damage) but it is necessary for them to understand that God is the only just Judge able to judge appropriately and forgive graciously. Furthermore, if forgivess is the goal then forgiveness must be well-defined.

There are communities of psychologists, psychiatrists, advocate groups and governmental agencies, but the church needs to provide a community of safety for victims that encourages restoration, healing, self-esteem and reconciliation back to God. For the sexually abused, their inner turmoil can become a crisis of faith in a loving God who is able to protect the ones He loves. The ability for the victim to ask the question,

'Why did God allow this to happen to me?' and to address their anger with God, opens up the door to liberation and deliverance.

The hypothesis of this ministry project proposes that Christians who have experienced childhood sexual abuse have the ability to rise above their past as stronger, joyful, thankful people and that spiritual renewal can be attained through forgiveness, prayer, worship and faith in a Holy and Truly Present God. Awareness of the extent of childhood sexual abuse, and knowledge of who we are in Christ, can reverse the downward spiral of shame, guilt and despair experienced by victims of abuse. The purpose of this project is to heighten awareness of childhood sexual abuse, and encourage individuals who have experience this sort of trauma that recovery and spiritual wholeness are possible.

Methodology

The methodology utilized for gathering data is a mixed method that included a pre-test and post-test with a quantitative measurement scale. Also utilized were narratives, interviews, observations and documents that represented the qualitative portion of the methodology. The qualitative findings will either prove or dis-prove the quantitative statistical results based on convergent or divergent results. The value of using a mixed method is it helps to develop a stronger understanding of the problem being researched.

Research Design

Research was conducted by the pastor of Lady Lake United Methodist Church through two workshop weekends held at the church. Written and and oral personal

testimonies, narratives, discussion groups on forgiveness. and confidential counseling sessions were also part of the research. The pastor has undergone additional counseling sessions relative to the broadening of her own awareness of childhood sexual abuse that uncovered deep issues that needed to be explored. The experience and mentoring sessions of the Pastoral Care and Counseling cohort at United Theological Seminary also prepared the pastor for this task of helping individuals explore, discuss and uncover trauma and hopefully find healing and wholeness in Christ. The research supported the value of broadening awareness of CSA and its connection to psychological, spiritual, physical and emotional dysfunction. Knowledge of CSA is crucial in all areas of society where CSA is least likely to be discussed and/or investigated. In addition, spiritual recovery is first and foremost in the healing process of those who have experienced CSA. Once a victim has become spiritually whole again, the pieces of one's emotional and physical life come together as well.

Quantitative method

The initial pre-test and post-test consisted of thirty-four questions that did not reveal the names of the participants, but did reveal age, level of education, income level and gender. However, for data comparison only fifteen of the thirty-four questions were used. The questions that were chosen helped to eliminate any answers that would not help in assessing knowledge of childhood sexual abuse and help in ease of evaluation of this project that focuses on awareness and potential recovery.

The following questions were used:

Question 1: How aware are you of childhood sexual abuse?

Question 2: Do you know of or have you heard of any abuse victims?

Question 5: Do you think childhood sexual abuse is a very rare occurrence?

Question 6: Do you consider childhood sexual abuse something that warrants conversation in the church?

Question 9: Would you agree that childhood sexual abuse victims experience just as much psychological abuse as they do physical abuse?

Question 10: Do you know how to recognize victims of childhood sexual abuse or to recognize those who are predators?

Question 16: Do most people recover from being sexually abused as children with no psychological, physical, emotional or spiritual problems?

Question 17: Does childhood sexual abuse only happen to less educated or low-income persons?

Question 18: Does childhood sexual abuse only happen in less religious families?

Question 21: Do you think secrets play a big part in childhood sexual abuse?

Question 22: Do you think the Bible says anything about childhood sexual abuse?

Question 24: Do you think psychological counseling, pastoral counseling and/or spiritual intervention is necessary for the victims?

Question 31: Do you think the victim should forgive the abuser?

Question 33: Do you believe a victim can overcome the ‘deep woundedness’ of childhood sexual abuse?

Question 34: Do you think you have ever been sexually abuse in any way?

These questions were then charted and evaluated for comparison of the data to measure understanding and/or growth of knowledge of the awareness of childhood sexual abuse. An analysis was then made on each chart.

Implementation

For the sake of this project, the following information relates only to the presentation of the awareness of Childhood Sexual Abuse. The workshops were held at Lady Lake United Methodist Church in Lady Lake, Florida. The two workshops were held over two consecutive weekends – 3 p.m. Friday and 9 a.m. Saturday, February 26-27, 2016 and the following weekend, and Saturday, February 27, 2016 at 9 a.m. Then, the same times and days the following weekend March 4-5, 2016 (Appendix – project calendar). These weekend sessions were part of Child Protection Training Sessions that are required yearly by the United Methodist Church. These sessions would include education on sexual abuse, physical, mental abuse, physical neglect, emotional and psychological neglect, emotional abuse, medical neglect, child neglect and bullying prevention (see appendix). These sessions were originally to be held over four weekends. However, in conversation with the focus group mentor it was suggested the workshops be pared down to two weekends because people might lose interest if the project was too long. In actuality, we lost two people but two additional attendees balanced the loss of the others. The awareness of childhood sexual abuse and its impact on the lives of the victims would be the main goal of these sessions.

Over the two weekends an average of sixteen persons (14 laity and 2 clergy; 2 male and 14 female) were present. The racial breakdown was thirteen white, two African-

American and one Hispanic. The majority had children. The age range was from forty-five to eighty-five. Education, location and economic demographics are seen in the tables below:

Table 1.1. Education Demographics.

High School	College or some	Graduate school	No answer
2	11	2	

Table 1.2. Location Demographics

Northeast	Southeast	North Central	South Central	West Coast
9	3	3	0	1

Table 1.3. Yearly Economic Demographics

< $25,000	$25,000-$75,000	$75,000-$250,000	> $250,000
0	8	6	1

These tables show the majority of the participants were middle to upper class educated northerners. More women than men participated in the workshops most likely because more women serve in Sunday school and possibly because women may have experienced more sexual abuse than men. In addition, men are less likely to admit sexual abuse because of the cultural stigma of masculinity having to be strong and not weak or vunerable.

Each session opened with prayer, a reading of scripture, and a reminder of our Congregation Pledge (see appendix). We also closed each session with scripture reading, and a covenant prayer read responsively (see appendix). Each person in attendance

received an agenda and order of worship in addition to a list of sources and resources that can be helpful about child abuse (see appendix). Also included in the packet was a 'Safe Sanctuary Policy', based on the Florida Conference Child/Youth Protection Policy (appendix). The majority of the sessions were presentations facilitated by the pastor, the Staff Parish Committee Chair person and a professional associate. At each session there was time made available for questions, observations and some personal disclosures. The setting was in the fellowship hall with chairs in a half circle to facilitate ease of conversation with no barriers (such as a table) in between that might have given an atmosphere of teacher/student authority.

Session 1 – Friday February 26, 2016

The first Friday afternoon session was one and one-half hours. Introductions were made and information given as to the session's purpose. The participation Congregational Pledge (Appendix A) and Participant Covenant Statement (Appendix B) were read together. These statements were a promise to provide a safe and secure environment for all children and to preserve this church as a holy place of safety and protection for all who would enter. The Agenda for Child Protection Training (Appendix C) was distributed. Time was then given to fill out the first pre-test questionnaire – "Bringing Awareness to Childhood Sexual Abuse and Recovery" (Appendix D). This pre-test was returned back to the presenter. Even though there are thirty-four questions on this survey not all questions were used for statistical evaluation. The pre-test showed some lack of knowledge of some and confusion by one. The presenter also told the story about an eighty-eight year-old woman in her former church who confided that her father abused

his eight daughters up until the age of sixteen. This woman married and had children and lived a 'so called' normal life with this dark secret. She revealed this secret shortly before she died and the story was presented to establish the understanding that childhood sexual abuse is a darkness that is sometimes kept in the hearts of the victim their whole lives.

The presenter took note of one seventy-three year-old male who refused to answer the questions or checked off 'no answer' on most of the questions. This seemed unusual and the observer thought that he may have had personal experience with CSA. He seemed very uncomfortable in the class and did not make much eye contact. At the end of the workshops, his comfort level and eye contact seemed to improve. The observer made note that his pre-test and post-test showed more awareness of childhood sexual abuse even though when answering the last question 'Were you ever sexually abused?' he checked "no". The observer could not approach him because of confidentiality.

This first gathering was a presentation of current events, current statistics, CSA defined, how we can recognize abuse and who are the abusers (appendix). We also covered the classroom environment, age appropriate discipline, safety concerns, boundaries, reporting suspected abuse and how the church can help. During this time, focus was on an educational presentation of the history of childhood sexual abuse. Scripture presentations of the biblical promises of God to Creation were given during this time. Discussions on Psychological Trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and other psychological and behavioral problems were part of this session. The role of secrets in the shame/guilt continuum was presented along with Dr. Emma Justus' book *Please Don't Tell – What to Do with the Secrets People Share*. The presenter explained clergy and church leadership must create a sacred space in which sufferers can begin healing.

Session 2 – Saturday February 27, 2016

The following day was another one and one-half hour of Biblical storytelling from Second Samuel 13 (the rape of Tamar). Two written testimonials from victims of childhood sexual abuse were also part of this session. These two testimonials were read with permission from the victims whom the researcher knows personally. These testimonials are discussed in the qualitative section of this thesis.

Session 3 – Friday March 4, 2016

This afternoon presentation by a professional associate was on the effectiveness of support groups and advocate groups in and outside the church. She spoke on how support groups in the church and community are needed because of the large number of CSA victims that remain unnoticed. She also offered a handout of local sources and resources that would be helpful in learning more about child abuse (appendix). Questions were raised concerning reporting to the church suspected abuse both adult, and in particular. childhood sexual abuse. The participants were advised to report suspected abuse to the pastor who will then follow-up with the proper authorities. This session lasted one hour.

Session 4 – Saturday March 5, 2016

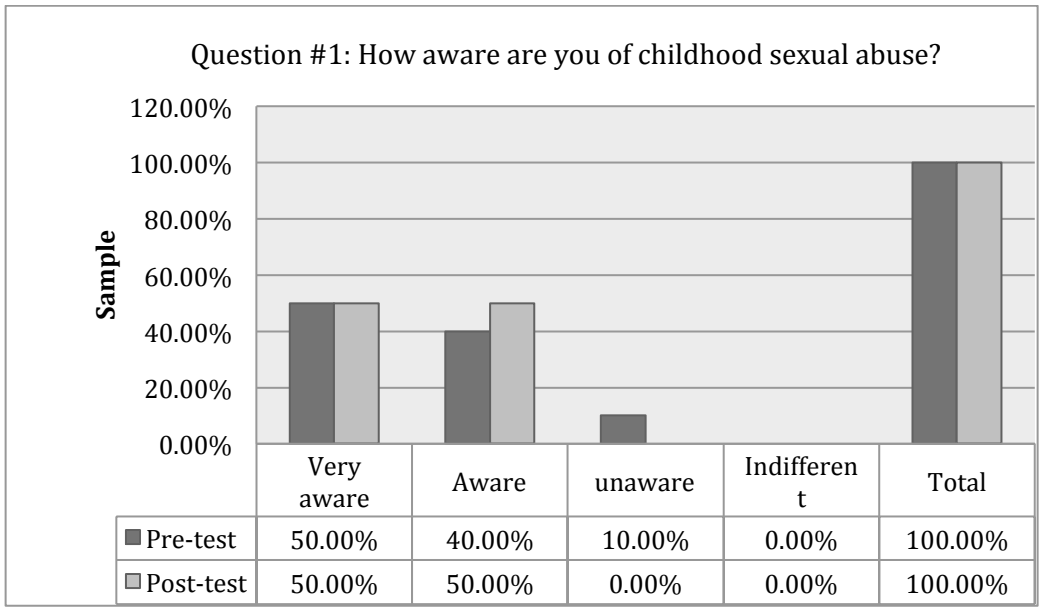
Saturday morning there was a presentation on how religious communities can train leaders and members of the congregation to support individuals who have suffered from childhood sexual abuse. A study was read about CSA in a Christian family. Also,

included in this session was a presentation on the importance of the ministry of presence (listening skills) and the importance of confidentiality. At the end of this Saturday session, the post-test (which had the same questions as the pre-test) was administered to assess growth in the awareness of childhood sexual abuse. This session was also one hour.

Summary of Learnings – Quantitative Results – Random selection of 10 of 16 surveys

Following are the quantitative comparative results of the pre-test/post-test.

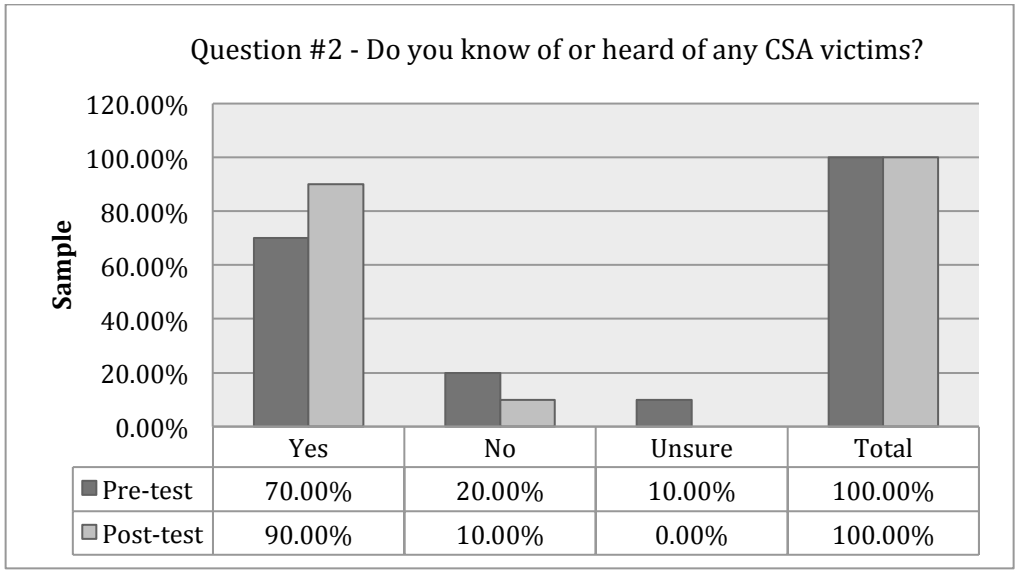
Question number one sought to demonstrate the subject's initial knowledge about childhood sexual abuse. The data showed five of the ten participants were very aware of CSA, four were aware of the existence of CSA, and one person had no knowledge of CSA. At the end of the workshops, the data showed there was an increase of knowledge by one person. The analysis for this result is that education is a useful tool.



	Very aware	Aware	unaware	Indifferent	Total
Pre-test	50.00%	40.00%	10.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Post-test	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%

Figure 1 – Survey question # 1 – Awareness of Childhood Sexual Abuse.

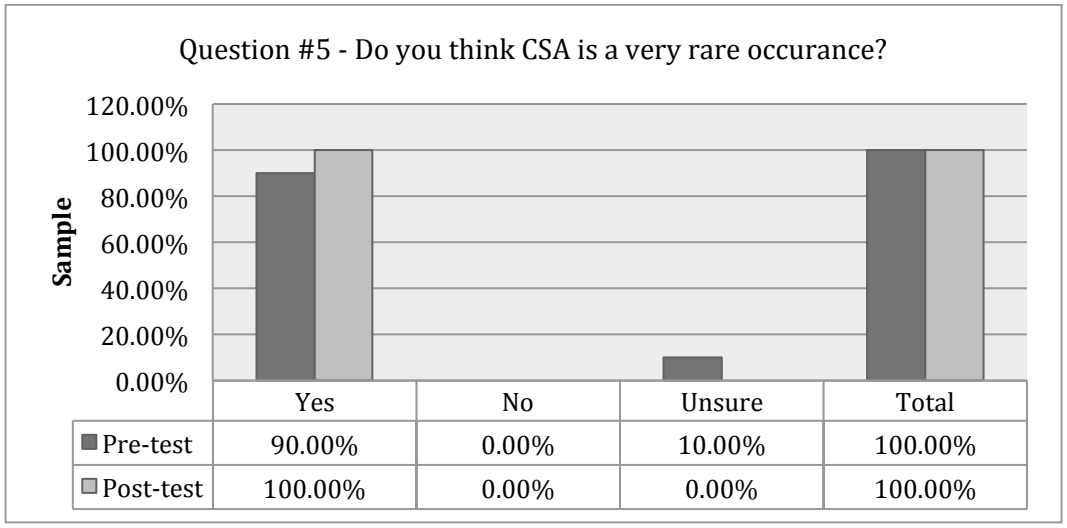
Question number two sought to determine if the participants knew of or had heard of any victims of CSA. The data in figure two seems to show some knowledge of CSA victims with only two participants stating no knowledge and one participant unclear. The analysis for this result reflects a lack of clarity by one of the participants. The majority of the participants were sure they knew of victims. Two of the participants did not know of any victims. After the post-test one participant from the 'no' category and the unsure participant were now sure he or she knew of a victim or victims. The analysis for this result is that, again, education is a useful tool in increasing awareness of CSA.



	Yes	No	Unsure	Total
Pre-test	70.00%	20.00%	10.00%	100.00%
Post-test	90.00%	10.00%	0.00%	100.00%

Figure 2 – Survey Question 2 – Knowledge of CSA victims

Question number five sought to determine if childhood sexual abuse was very rare. The data in figure three showed 90% in the pre-test and 100% in the post-test felt that CSA was very rare. Research has shown that childhood sexual abuse is more common than the average person realizes. The answer of the participants showed a possible misunderstanding of the information given by the facilitator or confusion based on how the question was asked on the survey. The analysis shows that the facilitator must be clear in asking questions.



	Yes	No	Unsure	Total
Pre-test	90.00%	0.00%	10.00%	100.00%
Post-test	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%

Figure 3 – Survey Question 5 – Is CSA a very rare occurrence?

Question number 6 sought to determine if childhood sexual abuse should warrant conversation in the church? The data in figure four demonstrated 90% of the participants felt CSA should be discussed in the church and one participant was unsure. After the presentations were given the data showed the one participant who was unsure decided it was better that the church not be involved. The analysis for this result may have resulted in the participant feeling that the church needs to focus more on spiritual growth rather than reporting of childhood sexual abuse. There was no additional information as to why the participant changed from being unsure to 'no'.

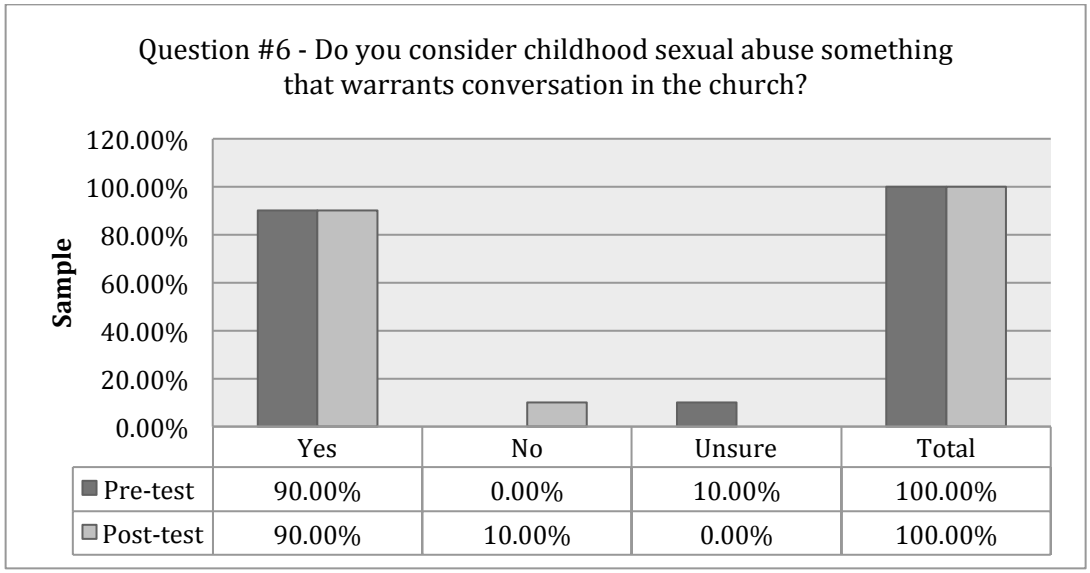


Figure 4 – Survey Question 6 – Does CSA warrant conversation in the church?

Question number nine sought to determine if CSA victims experience just as much psychological abuse as physical abuse. The data in figure five demonstrated that 90% of the participants felt that CSA victims experience both psychological and physical abuse. One participant was unsure. After the presentations the data showed 100% of the participants agreed that CSA victims experience both psychological and physical abuse. The analysis for this result is that education is a useful tool in increasing awareness of CSA.

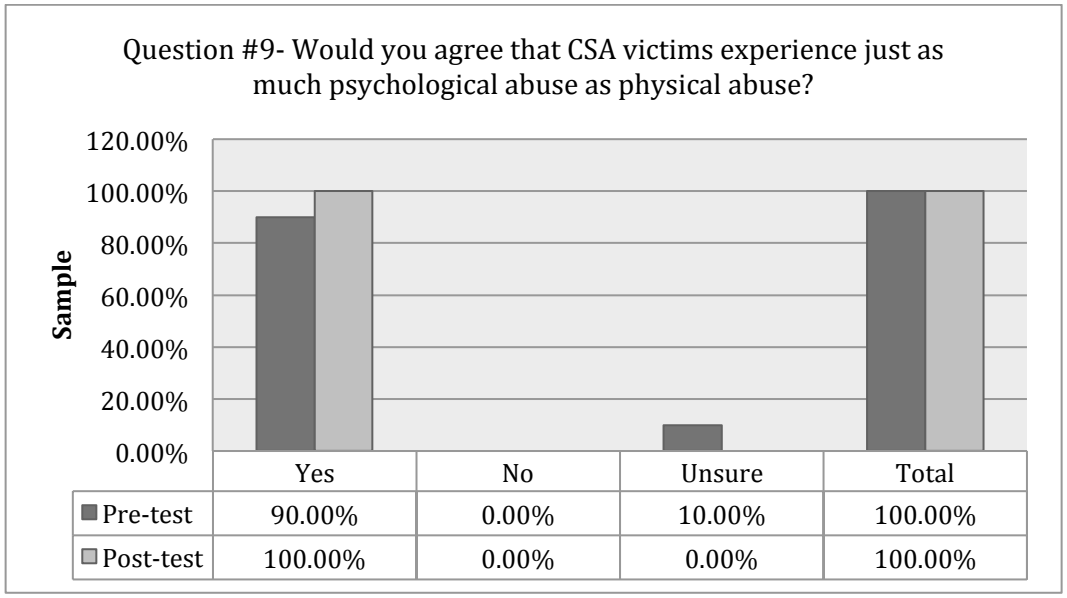


Figure 5 – Survey Question 9 – Do CSA victims experience psychological and physical abuse?

Question number ten sought to determine if the participants could recognize a victim of CSA. The data in figure six demonstrated that 30% of the participants said they could recognize a victim of CSA; 40% of the participants said they could not recognize a victim of CSA and 10% of the participants said they were unsure. After the post test the result jumped to 100% of the participants felt they could spot a possible victim of CSA by physical, behavioral and emotional responses. The analysis for this result reflects that education on the physical appearance, behavioral and emotional response of a victim can help in detecting the possibility of CSA.

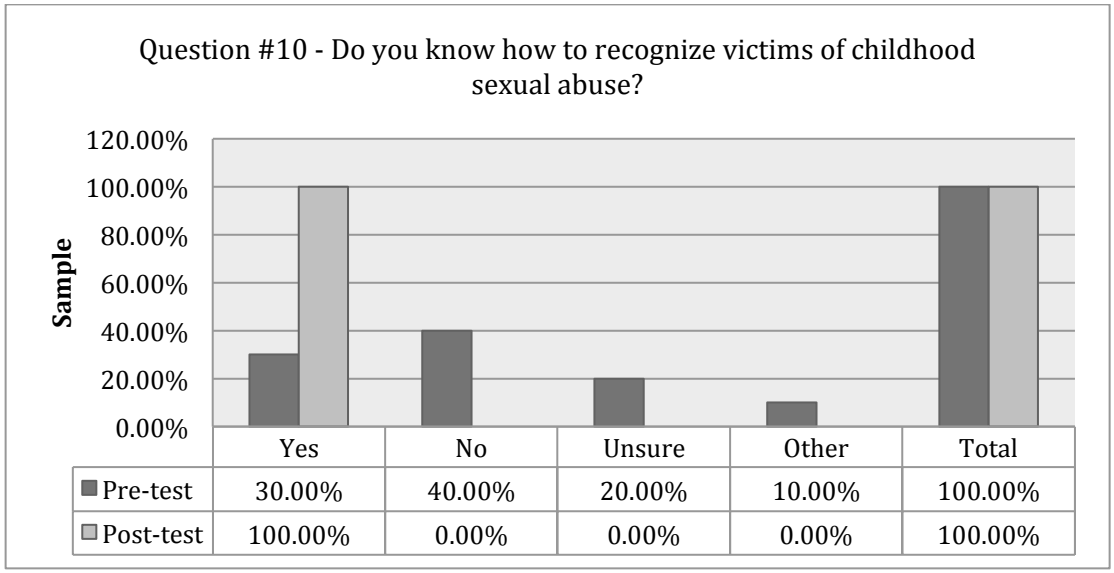


Figure 6 – Survey Question 10 – Can you recognize victims of CSA?

Question number sixteen sought to determine if victims can recover from CSA with no psychological, physical, emotional or spiritual problems? The data in figure seven showed overwhelmingly by 80% that the participants in the study felt that victims of CSA do not recover from abuse without some lasting effect. Twenty-percent were unsure if recovery was possible. After the post-test it was a surprise to the researcher that 90% of the participants felt that victims of CSA do not recover and 10% of the participants felt recovery is possible. The analysis for this result is the need for clarity. The researcher's hypothesis is that spiritual recovery is possible; however research has been shown that even though spiritual recovery is possible, there may be residues of psychological problems, such as PTSD and physical problems depending on the extent of the abuse. Some sexual abuse can be so bad that it may leave the victim sterile or unable to have a normal sex life.

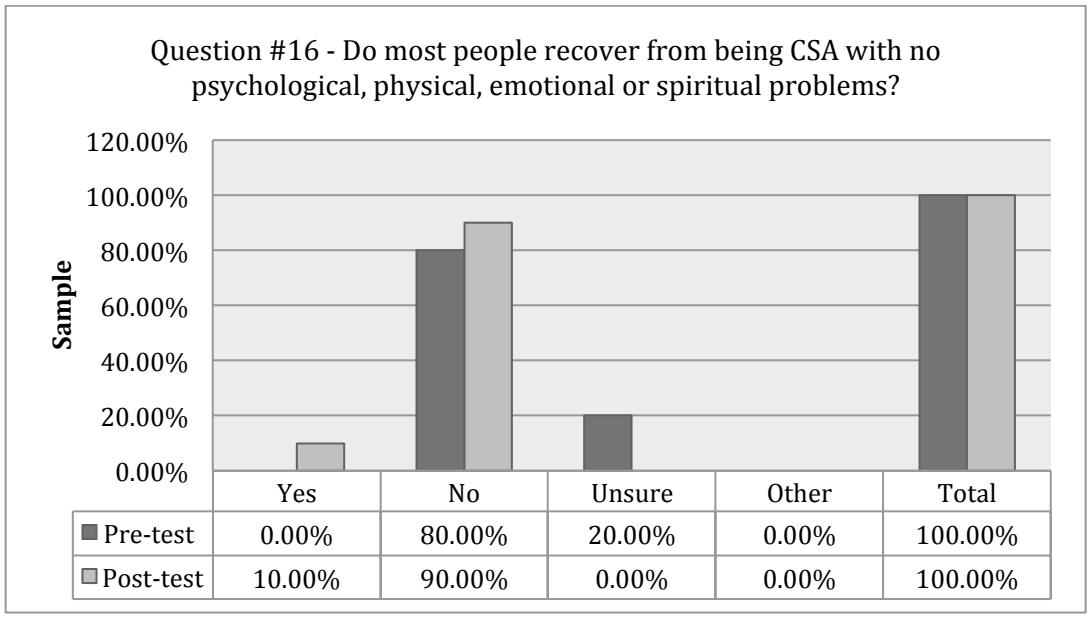
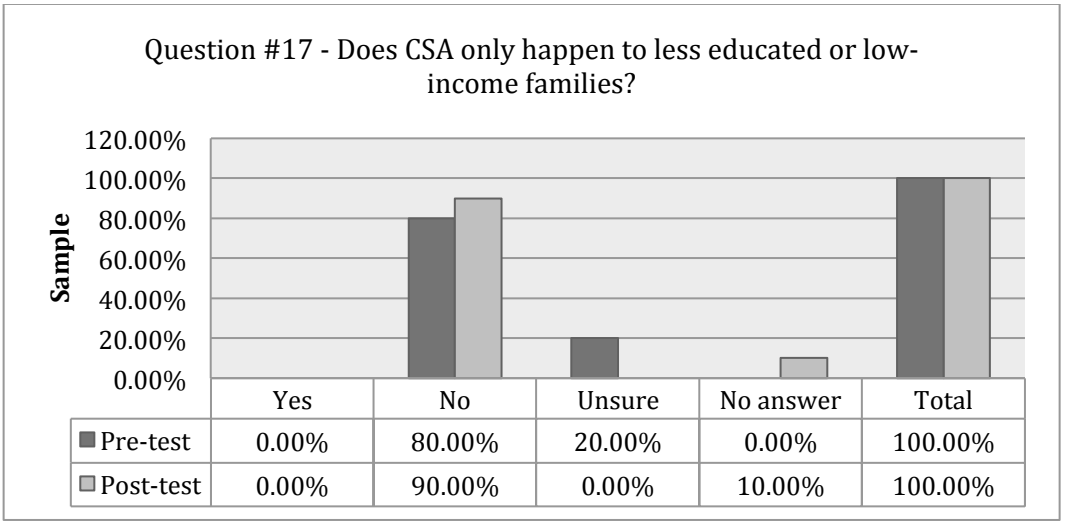


Figure 7 – Survey Question #16 – Do victims recover from CSA?

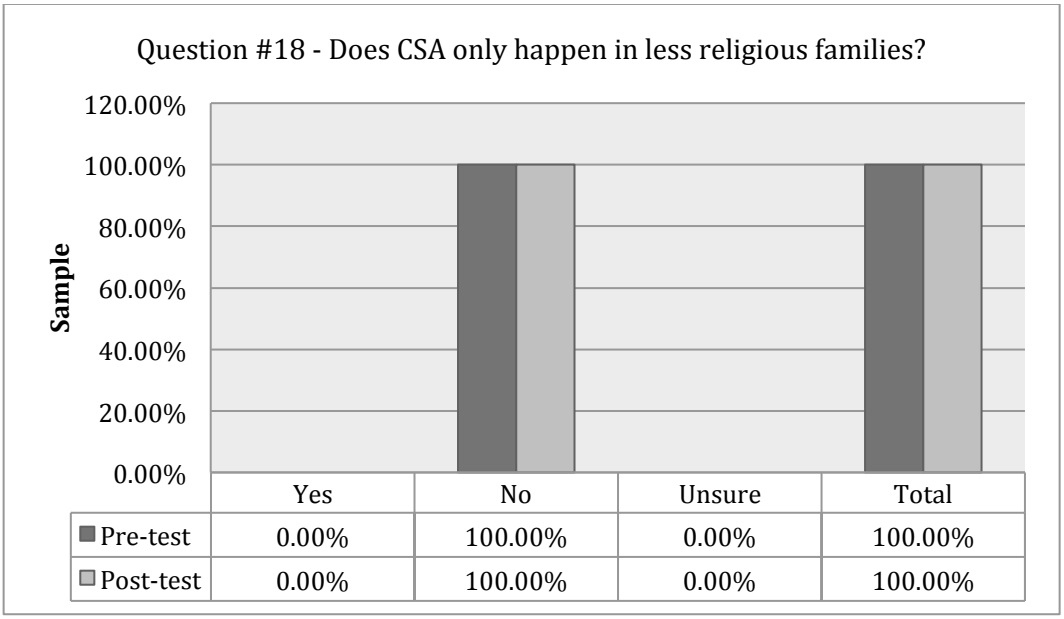
Question number seventeen sought to determine if participants thought CSA is prevalent in only less educated or low-income families. The data in figure eight demonstrated that 80% of the participants were aware that CSA existed across the board. Twenty percent were unsure. In other words, education and income does not play a part in cultural awareness of CSA. After the presentations, the data in the post-test showed a 10% increase in knowledge. However, what concerns the research is the 'no answer' by one participant. This was the same participant who was observed to be uncomfortable in workshops. The analysis for this result is that education is a useful tool in increasing awareness of CSA.



	Yes	No	Unsure	No answer	Total
Pre-test	0.00%	80.00%	20.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Post-test	0.00%	90.00%	0.00%	10.00%	100.00%

Figure 8 – Survey Question #17 –CSA only happens in less educated or low-income families?

Question number eighteen sought to determine if the participants felt that CSA only happened in less religious families. The data in the pre-test and the post- test in figure nine overwhelmingly stated religion does not play a part in CSA. During the presentation, the facilitator read a story about a seemingly upright religious family where childhood sexual abuse was actively going on in the home. The analysis showed that the participants were very knowledgeable that religion does not play a part in whether or not a child is abused. The researcher felt that because the workshops were done in a religious setting, participants would be more aware of the possibility of abuse within religious institutions.



	Yes	No	Unsure	Total
Pre-test	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Post-test	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%

Figure 9 – Survey Question #18 – CSA only happens in less religious families?

Question number twenty-one sought to determine if secrets play a big part in childhood sexual abuse. The data in the pre-test and the post- test in figure ten overwhelmingly showed that secrets do play a part in CSA. The analysis of this data demonstrated some knowledge or experience of CSA were the child is told not to tell.

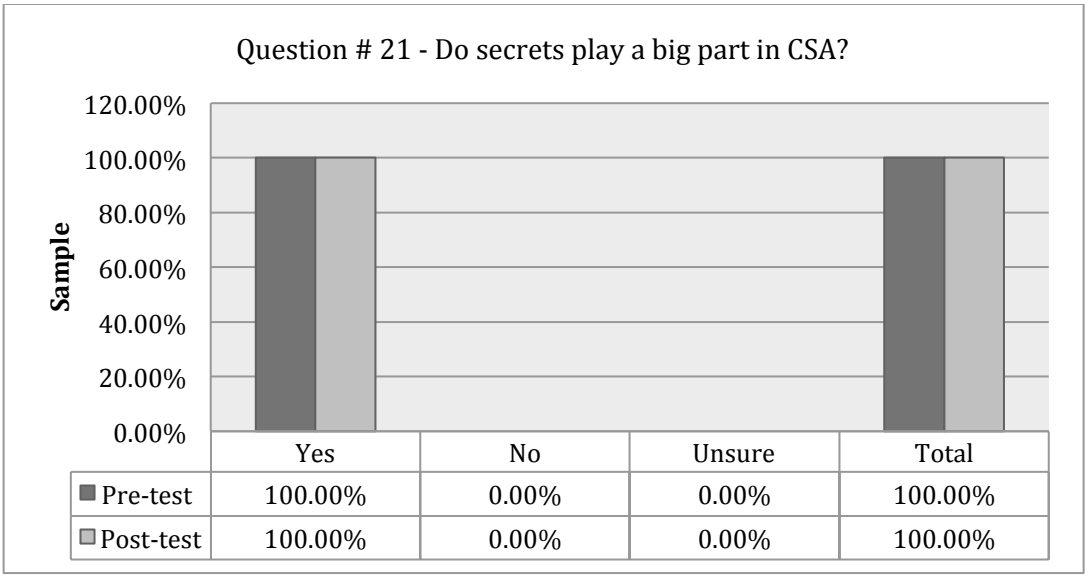


Figure 10 – Survey Question # 21 – Do secrets play a part in CSA?

Question number twenty-two sought to discover if the participants knew of anything in the Bible about CSA. The pre-test data in figure eleven demonstrated a lack of knowledge about the Bible mentioning anything about CSA: 40% of the participants said 'yes'; 20% said 'no'; 30% were unsure and one participant did not answer. After the presentations of Second Samuel and the rape of Tamar, in addition to what Jesus said about children – the post-test improved slightly to 80% now being aware of what the Bible says about CSA. One of the participants was still unsure. The research may attribute it to the story of Tamar where no age was mentioned. And again there was this one participant who did not give an answer. The analysis for this result is that the Bible does not give too many instances about CSA but the Bible alludes to the care of children because they are innocent and precious in God's sight.

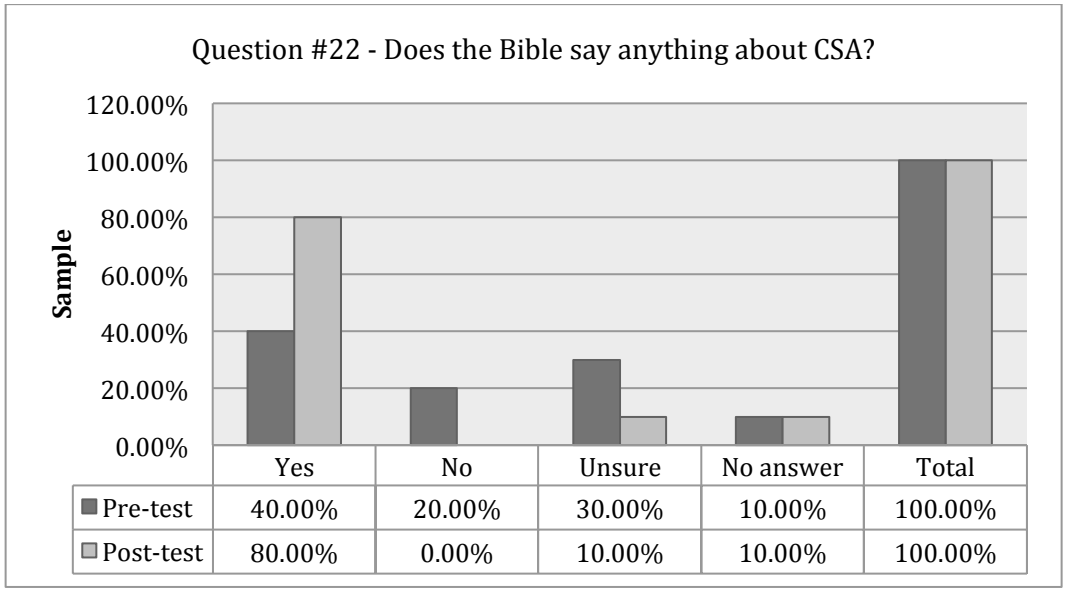
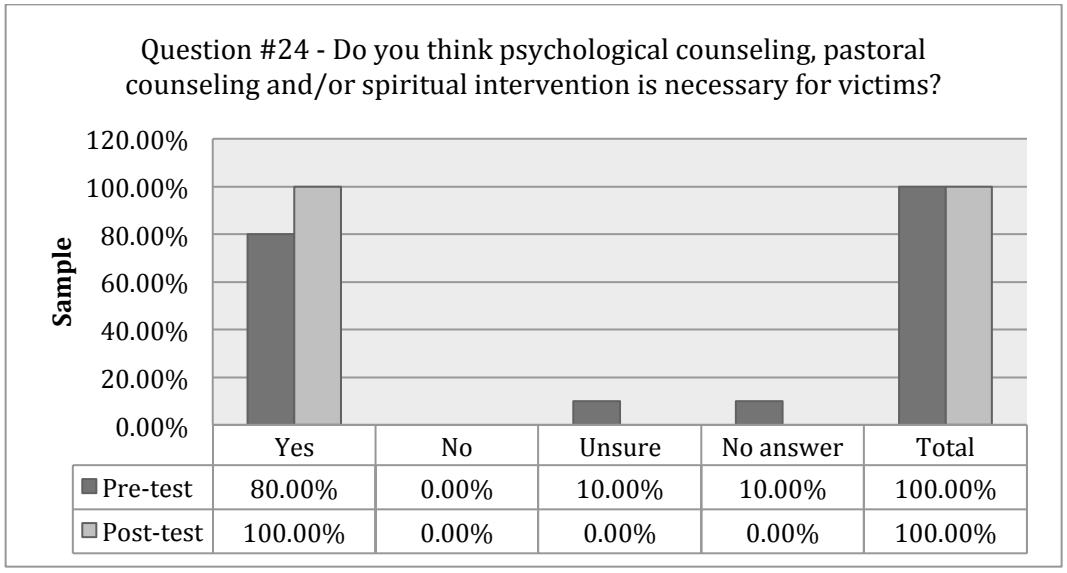


Figure 11 – Survey Question #22 – Does the Bible say anything about CSA?

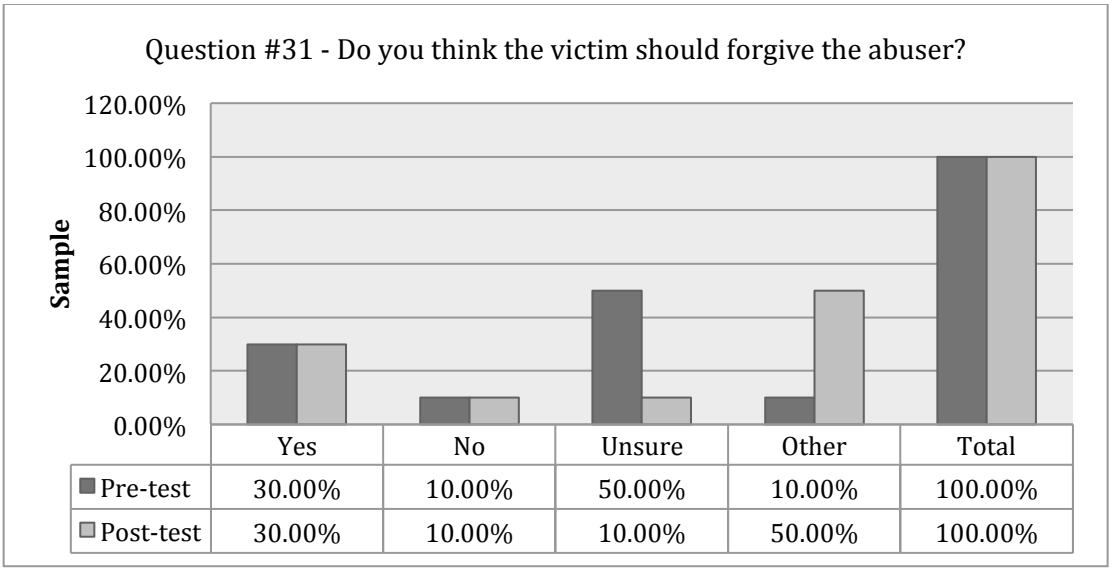
Question number twenty-four sought to determine if the participants thought psychological or pastoral counseling or spiritual intervention was necessary for victims of CSA. The date in figure twelve showed that 80% of the participants felt some sort of counseling or intervention was necessary for recovery. One participant was unsure and one participant gave no answer. After the presentations, the post-test score rose to 100% of the participants felt that some sort of counseling or spiritual intervention was necessary for recovery. The analysis for this result proved that spiritual intervention or some sort of counseling can be helpful for a victim of CSA to return to wholeness.



	Yes	No	Unsure	No answer	Total
Pre-test	80.00%	0.00%	10.00%	10.00%	100.00%
Post-test	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%

Figure 12 – Survey Question #24 – Is counseling necessary for CSA victims?

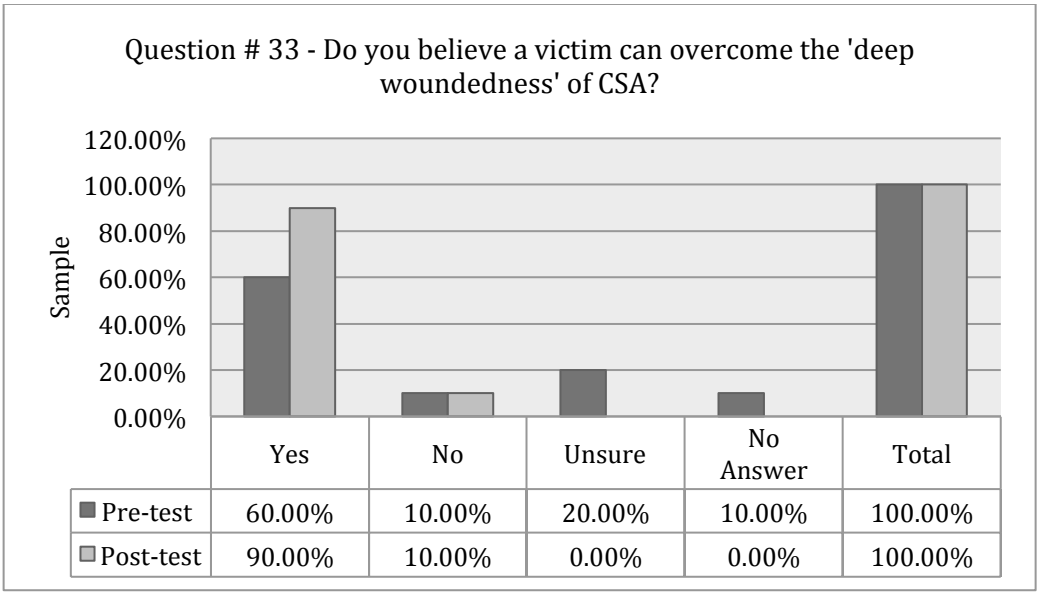
Question number thirty-one sought to determine if the victim should forgive the abuser? The data in figure thirteen showed that 30% of the participants felt that forgiveness is necessary for recovery; ten-percent said ‘no’; fifty-percent were unsure and ten-percent who checked other stated it was ‘up to the abuser’. The data for the post-test remained constant except from the ‘unsure’ participants who made comments in the other section – ‘personal decision of the victim’; ‘if possible after a time of healing’; if at all possible, but they shouldn’t be chastised if they absolutely can not’; ‘only if they are ready’; and ‘maybe later in life’. The analysis for this result is most of the participants’ feel it is hard to forgive the abuser and if they do forgive it will take some time.



	Yes	No	Unsure	Other	Total
Pre-test	30.00%	10.00%	50.00%	10.00%	100.00%
Post-test	30.00%	10.00%	10.00%	50.00%	100.00%

Figure 13 – Survey Question # 31 – Should the victim forgive the abuser?

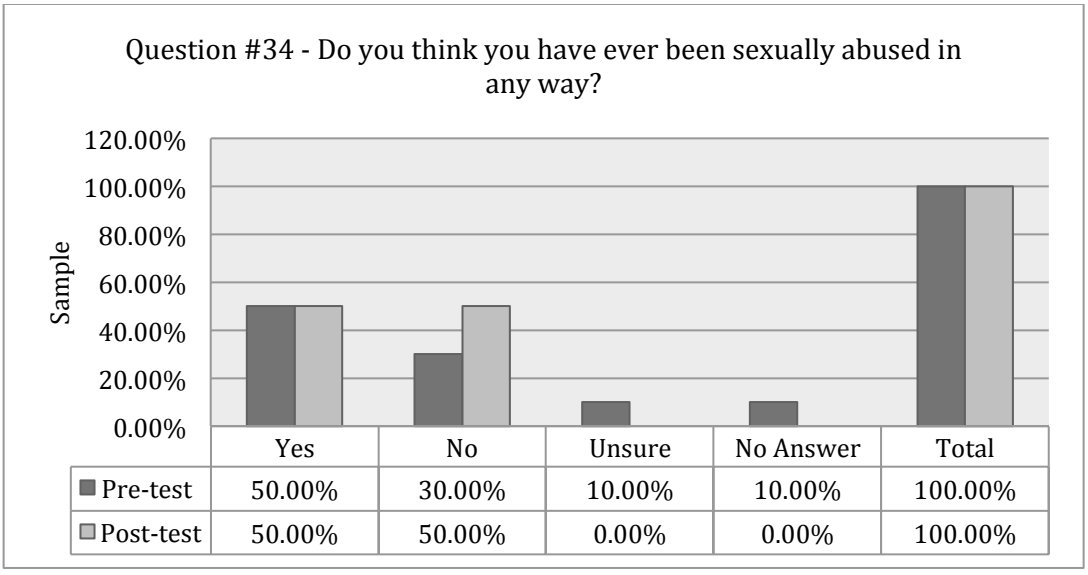
Question number thirty-three sought to determine if the participants believe that victims of CSA can overcome ‘deep woundedness’. The date in figure fourteen demonstrated that 60% of the participants felt the ‘deep woundedness’ of CSA could be overcome; however, 10% said ‘no’ and 20% were unsure. One participant had no answer. After the presentation on the concept of ‘deep woundedness’ 90% of the participants learned that victims can overcome the hurt of their past. One participant cited that the pain of the past could not be overcome by any method. The analysis for this result is that deep woundedness can be overcome by pastoral or psychological counseling and spiritual intervention, based on the data in figure twelve.



	Yes	No	Unsure	No Answer	Total
Pre-test	60.00%	10.00%	20.00%	10.00%	100.00%
Post-test	90.00%	10.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%

Figure 14 – Survey Question # 33 – Can a victim overcome ‘deep woundedness’?

Question number thirty-four sought to uncover the extent of CSA within the participating group. The data in the pre-test revealed that 40% of the participants felt they had been sexually abused as a child; 30% said 'no'; 10% were unsure and 10% gave no answer. After the presentation the post-test data revealed a constant answer of 'yes' to having been sexually abused. However, the "no" answer stayed "no" and the unsure participant result went to 'no'. The analysis for this result is not clear. Perhaps the participants who were not sure or did not answer discovered that what they thought was sexual abuse turned out to be that it was not abuse at all. There was no way to explore this further.



	Yes	No	Unsure	No Answer	Total
Pre-test	50.00%	30.00%	10.00%	10.00%	100.00%
Post-test	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%

Figure 15 – Survey Question #34 – Have you been sexually abused?

Summary of Learning - Qualitative (Interviews and Narratives)

The first written testimonial (appendix) was from a white. seventy-six year-old woman who was born to a mother who was addicted to alcohol and nicotine. Her alcoholic father physically and emotionally abused her and her siblings. The household was kept in a state of fear, constant confusion and pain. Secrets were a big part of family

life. The victim found solace in a nearby church when she was afraid. As a teenager she became promiscuous, became pregnant and miscarried the child. She later became involved with a boy who was an alcoholic and who also verbally, physically, and sexually abused her. As an adult, she married, had two children, and divorced. She later remarried and found that sexual abuse had become a curse in her family as two of her grandchildren sexually abused one another and caused disruption in the family. During the years of her second marriage, God called her into ministry. She became a pastor of a small church. She is now active in teaching and voicing the devastation that child sexual abuse can cause in one's life.

The second written testimonial (appendix) was from a black seventy-five year-old woman who was born out of wedlock into a very religious family. Her grandmother taught her about God and Jesus. An alcoholic stepfather sexually abused her. This abuse began when she was eight years old and lasted until she began menstruating. The abuse began as tickling. She equated sex with love. She also knew her mother was aware of the abuse because she witnessed it one day and walked away. Around the age of twelve her aunt re-introduced her to God and took her to church. She was baptized when she was twelve but did not develop a personal relationship with God. As an older teen she joined the Army, met and married her first husband but later turned to drinking and smoking after this marriage failed. She finally returned to her faith, met a man who became her second husband and settled down. At the age of sixty-five she prepared herself for ministry, returned to school and was licensed as a minister of the gospel.

In October 2016 there was a verbal testimonial of sexual abuse given by a clergy leader at a retreat. There was a young woman who became visibly sick from hearing this

testimony and had to be ushered out of the conference room. I was called along with the presenter to come to the aid of this young woman. She was literally vomiting and physically drained. We prayed with her, pleaded the blood of Christ over her, anointed her with oil, demanded Satan to flee from her and asked that the Holy Spirit intervene in this situation. After things calmed down this young woman said the testimony of the presenter caused her to vividly relive the sexual abuse of her father in which she became an active partner in enjoying the sexual act. This 'reliving' of years of these 'horrific' incidents, which her mother was aware of, made her realize that she had reacted with hate towards her parents, promiscuity as a teen and young woman, bouts of alcoholism and numerous suicide attempts. She was currently in the midst of counseling to help her overcome some of these maladies. As clergy persons, we were able to calm her down.

In the spring of 2016, there was also a verbal testimonial of fifty-year-old woman who attended our evening worship hour. She came with the lay speaker for the evening. We invited this lay speaker to talk on how God healed her physically. However, after the testimonial, this woman spoke on how God healed her from sexual abuse that began at nine by various men whom her mother brought into the house. This woman told of the shame and guilt that lead to behavioral problems involving drugs, alcohol, promiscuity, hatred of self and suicide attempts. She also had been married five times to five abusive husbands. She shared that the woman who came with her that evening was the one who lead her to Christ and it was God who saved her life. I wanted to follow up with her, however, she declined.

After the two written testimonials were read discussion revolved around how faith was a common core of becoming spiritually whole. In all four testimonials alcoholism

and physical abuse was also a common factor leading to sexual abuse. Unlike the story of Tamar in Second Samuel 13 these women went on to lead a productive life. Tamar, on the other hand, was never heard of again – 'and Tamar lived in her brother Absalom's house, a desolate woman' (2 Samuel 13: 22).

Conclusion

At the close of the workshop, participants suggested a need for the workshop to be offered to other churches and to our church on a yearly basis. Participants expressed that, overall, the workshops had been valuable in learning the broadness of childhood sexual abuse and how to possibly identify an abused child. The workshops provided a safe environment to discuss, personally reflect and see how God can heal victims from the past of sexual trauma.

One goal of this research is to use this project to develop a resource manual for leaders in the church, community, schools and other public settings. The context associates, who were a requirement for this project, played a major role in helping develop these workshops. Even though it was not discussed, hopefully this project played a role in helping them to promote self-healing and recovery towards spiritual wholeness.

One troubling aspect of this workshop was the absense of more male participation and the observance of one male who was visiably uncomfortable during the presentations. My four workshops were a requirement for my Sunday school teachers, Staff Parish Chairperson (who was a man) and the children's choir director (who was a man). Not knowing there might be male victims in the participating group, I should have given the option to excuse any of the participants if the subject matter became too uncomfortable

for them. For many survivors, male or female, disclosing an abuse story is challenging enough. However, the issue of male sexual abuse can add a level of embarrasement especially in the company of women. The researcher suggests a one day training, led by a male survivor of CSA, to the Men's ministry of the local church or possibly a Y.M.C.A. to learn about the challenges and misconceptions men have in assessing or being an advocate for male victims of CSA. Included in this training could be referral to an internet website or local advocate group for the anominity of men who may be embarrased to admit their victiminzation and training on the basic concepts, theories and approaches on working with male survivors.

The research, workshops and discussions also brought additional awareness to the researcher that helped her to understand her life journey and that it is necessary for the church to address childhood sexual abuse. As a pastor, it is important that all pastors know themselves and be made aware of the damage that can be done if they do not approach this type of sexual trauma carefully. It is important to know your own story of trauma and come to terms with yourself before dealing with the trauma of a victim. The personal experience of the researcher and her awareness of the potential harmful effects of childhood sexual abuse were primary factors in the selection of this subject. The researcher's firsthand experience in dealing with rejection, shame, guilt, and forgiveness played a significant role in illuminating the seriousness of this type of trauma and how it can cause a downward spiral in one's life. Therapeutic support is not just simply telling the victim to pray or forgive the abuser. Educating church leaders, and providing the tools necessary, will allow the church to help victims recover their lives by being sensitive to their needs. As leaders in the church, we must be intentional to heal the hurt of past abuse

through listening and providing the needed intervention towards recovery. Therefore, the goal of this project was to bring awareness of childhood sexual abuse and how victims can return to wholeness by reconnecting with God has been accomplished.

APPENDIX A

CONGREGATIONAL PLEDGE

CONGREGATIONAL PLEDGE

(*Used in the service of the Baptism of Children of the Methodist Church*)

Pastor:
Members of the household of faith
I commend to your love and care (this child),
Whom we this day recognize as a member of the family of God.
Will you endeavor so to live
That this child may grow in the knowledge and love of God,
Through our Savior Jesus Christ?

People:
With God's help
We will so order our lives after the example of Christ,
That (this child) surrounded by steadfast love,
May be established in the faith,
And confirmed and strengthened
In the way that leads to life eternal.

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT COVENANT STATEMENT

PARTICIPATION COVENANT STATEMENT

The congregation of _____ is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, and volunteers who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The following policy statement reflects our congregation's commitment to preserving this church as a holy place of safety and protection for all who would enter and as a place in which all people can experience the love of God through relationships with others.

• No adult who convicted of child abuse (either sexual abuse, physical abuse, or emotional abuse) should work with children or youth in any church-sponsored activity.

• All adults involved with children and youth of our church shall observe the Child Protection Policy at all times.

• All adults involved with children, youth of our church shall attend required training, and educational events provided by the church to keep volunteers informed of church policies and laws regarding child abuse.

• All adults involved with children and youth of our church shall immediately report to their supervisor any behavior that seems abusive or inappropriate.

Do you agree to observe and abide by all church policies regarding working in ministries with children and youth? _____ YES _____NO

I have read this Participation Covenant, and I agree to observe and abide by the policies set forth above.

_____ _____

Signature of Applicant Date

APPENDIX C

AGENDA – CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING

Child Protection Training (February/March 2016)

I. Opening Worship
Prayer of Invocation - Gracious and most merciful God, you have brought us together in witness to your love of all children. Open our hearts and minds in this moment and prepare us to receive your message. Show us your will and fill us to overflowing with courage to face the reality of child abuse. Give us energy and dedication enough to make this, your church, a holy and hallowed place where all your children may be safe and secure as they grow in faith and in their knowledge of your presence in their lives! Amen.
Scripture Reading: Exodus 22:21-23; Matthew 19:14; and Luke 9:46-48
Reminder of our Congregational Pledge – Hymnal page 44
Survey – completed before the presentations and again at the end of the presentation next week.

II. Introductory Information

- Current events
- Current statistics
- What is abuse/How can we Recognize it/Who are the abusers?

III. Maintaining a positive Classroom Environment
IV. Appropriate Behavior for Teachers and Leaders
V. Screening/Training
VI. Reporting Abuse - Keeping Our Children and Workers Safe?
VII. Boundaries
VIII. Closing Worship

- Covenant Forms (page 17 of child protection handout) – repeat together/sign and tear out
- Scripture reading: Luke 9:46-48
- Responsive Reading

IX. Offering - bring forward signed covenant forms as a sign of offering themselves in ministry with children and youth. Sing the Doxology.
X. Benediction - May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit guide and direct you in all you do. Amen.

Maintaining a Positive Classroom Environment

Maintaining a positive classroom environment will encourage good behavior by the students and improve the learning process. As the teacher or leader in the learning environment, you will want to always find the positive way of speaking and working with the young people in your care. Keeping your voice on a level tone goes a long way in keeping the noise level in the classroom to an appropriate level. The louder you talk, the louder the noise level will be. Always find as many positive ways to acknowledge the students in your care as possible.

A. Appropriate Discipline – A well-designed and managed program prevents misbehavior by: limiting the number of children in a classroom; having adequate staff; discouraging competition; encouraging children to express feelings, and be empathetic; and developing and discussing rules of conduct. The purpose for setting disciplinary guidelines is to enable children to develop internal control mechanisms that foster growth and promote societal values. Children must be trained in basic rules of conduct. (More specific information is available in some curriculum materials and a book by Group Publishing, "The Discipline Guide" by Jody Capehart, Gordon West & Becki West.)
B. Age-Level Characteristics – Knowing what is appropriate for each age level enhances the learning by our students. Each level has it's own unique aspects that when they are acknowledged and planned for, produces more learning and less discipline problems. Here are some sample ideas, more can be found in curriculum resources and educational textbooks:

Ages 3-6: Moral Development: Preschoolers are very "me-oriented." They are the center of their own worlds. Their entire view of right and wrong – along with their faith – is based upon what influential models (such as parents and teachers) tell them. Cognitive Level: Preschoolers' play is symbolic of real life.

Ages 6-8: Moral Development: For younger children, the moral code is "an eye for an eye." If they are pinched, they pinch back. Personal values are rooted in a "law and order" approach. Things that benefit young children are almost always seen as right, whereas harmful things are almost always viewed as wrong. The world, like their faith, is black and white. Cognitive Level: Young children think in concrete terms about the ideas and concepts they're learning. They need help understanding symbolic or abstract ideas.

Ages 9-12:
Moral Development: Children at this age begin to see shades of gray in their world. They question authority more and understand that individual values can impact the lives of others. They also begin to understand that doing "wrong things" means more than just "getting into trouble" or facing punishment from parents or teachers. Faith becomes a working, personal faith. Cognitive Level: Older children continue to think in concrete terms, although by the end of childhood they can more readily understand abstract concepts.

C. Reasonable Ratios Between Adults and Students: The two adult rule should always be encouraged. This is a safety issue as well as help in handling the students. Ratios differ by age group but as a general rule: 3:1 for children under the age of 3; 5:1 for children between the ages of 3 and 6; 10:1 is a good rule of thumb for the rest. These are guidelines that should give you a sensitivity to the number of adults and students together in any one setting.

Appropriate Behavior for Teachers and Leaders

Appropriate behavior shows how we value and respect our students. The following are specific ways that are good ways to interact with your students:

- Listening to them and discerning their needs is crucial to preventing difficulties.
- Establishing a sense of trust early in the life of a class or group is essential to communication, cooperation and creating a safe environment..
- Taking an interest in your students, being mindful of playing favorites and being fair are key ingredients to creating healthy relationships.
- Taking students aside when possible during times of confrontation allows them to save face.
- Making judicious use of the following behaviors can aid in communicating with your students:

    - make eye contact
    - use safe touch (shoulder, hand)
    - be clear regarding acceptable behavior
    - kneel to be on same physical level
    - use activities to keep students involved
    - take time to learn about each student's interests
    - listen and be sensitive to the quiet, shy student

What Are We Doing to Keep Our Children and Workers Safe?

Present the new policies and procedures for the prevention of child abuse. Give participants time to read the policies. Allow time for questions and discussion as you review each section with the group.
A. Screening of Staff: Employees and Volunteers - Use the Conference Policy with the Guidelines and Requirements for this section. Provide copies of all screening forms, application forms, covenant forms, consent forms, and position description forms. Allow time for a review of each form and for questions from the participants.
B. Training of Staff: Employees and Volunteers - Use the Conference Policy with the Guidelines and Requirements for this section. Be thorough in reviewing all of the safety procedures, and allow time for questions.
C. Reporting Suspected Abuse - Use your policies and the information in this resource to explain the reporting procedure developed for your church. Explain the policy, the procedure for making a report, and the concept of confidentiality.
D. Completing the Task - If this is the first occasion the workers have had to see and review the screening, application, and position description forms, you may need to allow time for each of them to complete a form.

Appropriate Interpersonal Boundaries

Appropriate boundaries refer to appropriateness in how we play with our students. We need to know the difference between child-like and childish behavior. It also refers to appropriate touch in the classroom or other group settings.
The following are acceptable ways for touching a student:

- on the hand (especially with younger children), shoulder or upper back
- in the company of other adults

- never against a student's will (unless in the case of clear and present danger to them)
- never against a student's verbally or non-verbally expressed discomfort
- never when it would have the effect of over-stimulating a student
- never in a place on a student's body that is normally covered by a bathing suit

Behaviors that might be misunderstood as intrusive or invasive to students:

- embarrassing a student about his or her body
- a student sitting in a leader's lap
- telling stories or engaging in conversation that is lurid or over-stimulating.
- giving someone a deep back massage.

Closing Worship

A. Covenant Forms - Have one or two people distribute covenant forms to the participants. Say, "We have reached the end of our time together today. Let's prepare to celebrate our church's commitment to protecting our children, youth, and those who work with them. (There is a Participant Covenant in the Conference Packet in Appendix V.) Please read the covenant you have just received, and sign it as your commitment to our church's ministry with children and youth."

B. Return to the Scripture reading from opening worship. Read aloud the verses from Luke 9:46-48.

C. Invite the participants to pray responsively with you by saying, after each sentence prayer, "We welcome the children!"

Leader: O God, by our presence here today,
People: We welcome the children!
Leader: O God, by our promise in Holy Baptism,
People: We welcome the children!
Leader: O God, by our participation in the ministries of this congregation.
People: We welcome the children!
Leader: O God, by our commitment to keeping this place holy and safe in every way.
People: We welcome the children!
Leader: O God, give us wisdom, strength, and courage enough to show the world that…
People: We welcome the children! All: Amen!

D. Offering - Ask the participants to bring forward their signed covenant forms as a sign of offering themselves in ministry with children and youth. Sing the Doxology.

E. Benediction - May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit guide and direct you in all you do. Amen.

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE PRE AND POST TEST QUESTIONS

Research Topic: BRINGING AWARENESS TO CHIDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE AND RECOVERY

Thank you for taking time to participate in this research. Please take few minutes to complete the questions. All the responses will be tabulated anonymously, so please answer as truthfully as possible. The following questions are designed for the sole purpose of distinguishing the level of awareness about childhood sexual abuse and recovery. Any information disclosed, personal and/or opinions, are confidential and will not be shared with anyone unless required by law.

DO **NOT** WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS SURVEY. PLEASE WRITE LEGIBLY.

Demographic Information

Age ……. Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female

Do you have children?
☐ Yes ☐ No

What is your highest level of education?
☐ High school ☐ College/some college ☐ Graduate Level ☐ Other _____

Where did you receive the majority of your education?
☐ Northeast ☐ Southeast ☐ North Central ☐ South Central ☐ West Coast
☐ Other _____

What is your race/ethnicity?
☐ White ☐ Black ☐ Hispanic ☐ Multi-Racial ☐ Other _____

What is your socio-economic level?
☐ less than $25,000 ☐ $25,000 – 75,000 ☐ $75,000 – 250,000
☐ greater than $250,000

Are you a clergy or a laity?
☐ Clergy (Priest) ☐ Laity (Church Member)

Knowledge assessment

1. How aware are you of childhood sexual abuse?
   ☐ Very Aware ☐ Aware ☐ Unaware ☐ Indifferent

2. Do you know of or have heard of any childhood sexual abuse victims?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

3. Have you ever attended any conference or presentation related to childhood sexual abuse? ☐ Yes ☐ If yes, what state…… ☐ No

4. Have you ever read any books/literature related to childhood sexual abuse?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Other (Please Specify)……

5. Do you think childhood sexual abuse is very rare occurrence?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

6. Do you consider childhood sexual abuse something that warrants conversation in the church?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
   ☐ And why?.....

7. Do you feel that agencies/schools are doing enough by way of education to prevent/stop childhood sexual abuse?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐ Other…….

8. Do you feel that the church and its leaders are given enough information regarding childhood sexual abuse?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐ Other ……

9. Would you agree that childhood sexual abuse victims experience just as much psychological abuse as they do physical abuse?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐ Other ……

10. Do you know how to recognize victims of childhood sexual abuse or to recognize those who are predators?
    ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐ Other ……

11. Do you know how to recognize those who are predators?
    ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐ Other ……

12. What are the different types of childhood sexual abuse (select more than one)?
    ☐ Unwanted touching/kissing ☐ Nudity ☐ excessive cuddling
    ☐ Child sex trafficking ☐ rape ☐ language ☐ Other (Please Specify)……

13. Do you think boys cannot be sexually abused or it is a very rare occurrence?
    ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐ Other ……

14. What is the age of accountability?
    ☐ 16 ____ ☐ 17_____ ☐ 18____ ☐ Other (Please Specify)……

15. Do you think children should be empowered to learn about body ownership and what is appropriate and inappropriate touching?
    ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐ Other ……

16. Do most people recover from being sexually abused as children with no psychological, physical, emotional or spiritual problems?
    ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐ Other ……

17. Does childhood sexual abuse only happen to less educated or low-income persons
    ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐ Other ……

18. Does childhood sexual abuse only happen in less religious families?
    ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐ Other ……

19. Are there obvious signs that a person has been sexually abused?
    ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐ Other ……

20. Do people who are/or were sexually abused have difficulty reporting these situations to outsiders, especially professionals?
    ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐ Other ……

21. Do you think secrets play a big part in childhood sexual abuse?
    ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐ Other ……

22. Do you think the Bible says anything about childhood sexual abuse?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐ Other ……

23. What are some of the symptoms of the victims of childhood sexual abuse? (select all that apply)

☐ Guilt ☐ Shame ☐ PTSD ☐ Depression ☐ self-loathing ☐ Anger towards God ☐ Alcoholism ☐ Other (Please Specify)……....

24. Do you think Psychological counseling, pastoral counseling and/or spiritual intervention is necessary for the victims?

25. ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐ Other ……

26. Do you believe childhood sexual abuse is a crime that should be punished?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐ Other ……

27. Childhood sexual abuse is a …….issue? (check all that apply)

☐ Racial/Cultural Issue ☐ Class Issue ☐ Human Rights Issue

☐ Other (Please Specify)…….

28. What do you think is the estimated number of children sexually abused in the United States in 2013?[1]

☐ 114,500 ☐ 437,700 ☐ 679,000 ☐ 853,200 ☐ Over a Million

29. Do you think there is a special need to develop a specific theology for the victims of childhood sexual abuse?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐ Why? ……

30. Do you think the church needs to exercise far-reaching hospitality and far-reaching grace to the victims of childhood sexual abuse?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐ Other ……

31. Do you think the victim should forgive the abuser?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐ Other ……

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[1] *Child maltreatment 2013*. Available from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/child-maltreatment accessed January 15, 2015.

32. What areas are affected in the trauma of childhood sexual abuse? (check all that apply)

    ☐ psychological ☐ emotional ☐ physical ☐ spiritual

    ☐ Other (Please Specify)……

33. Do you believe a victim can overcome the 'deep woundedness' of childhood sexual abuse?

    ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐ Other ……

Thank you for participating in this survey.

APPENDIX E

STATISTICAL FACT SHEET AND OTHER RESOURCES

Child Abuse and Neglect Statistics

How Are We Really Doing?

The question of how many children are abused and neglected each year in the United States is seemingly simple, but it does not have an easy answer. Because several national and state agencies collect and analyze different data using different methods, the statistics vary. In addition, not every suspicion or situation of abuse or neglect is reported to child protection services (CPS) agencies. As a result, the number of reports likely underrepresents the number of children who actually suffer from abuse or neglect.

One of the most reliable and extensive information sources is the yearly Child Maltreatment Report by the Children's Bureau, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration on Children, Youth and Families. This yearly report is based on data collected by the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) from state CPS agencies. American Humane has provided significant technical assistance and expertise to NCANDS as a project subcontractor to Walter R. McDonald and Associates since the project began in 1990. According to NCANDS whose latest statistics are for 2005 an estimated 3.3 million referrals of child abuse or neglect were received by public social service or CPS agencies. Of these referrals, 899,000 children were confirmed to be victims of abuse or neglect (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2007). That means about 12 out of every 1,000 children up to age 18 in the United States were victims of maltreatment in 2005 (HHS, 2007).

Where Do We Get Our Information?

Reports of suspected child maltreatment come from multiple sources. In 2005, over one-half of reports (61.7 percent) were from professionals who are considered "mandated reporters" (USDHHS, 2007). Mandated reporters are required by law to report suspected abuse and neglect. The most common mandated reporter referral sources in 2005 were social services personnel, legal professionals, law enforcement, criminal justice personnel and medical and mental health professionals (USDHHS, 2007).

Types of Maltreatment Children Suffer (percentages)

Maltreatment can take many forms, and some children can suffer from more than one type. Since 1999, the majority of children confirmed to be victims of child maltreatment experienced neglect. The following are the percentages of children who experienced maltreatment in 2005 (USDHHS, 2007):

Neglect	62.8
Physical abuse	16.6
Sexual abuse	9.3
Emotional/psychological abuse	7.1
Medical neglect	2.0
Other	14.3

The 'Other' category listed above includes abandonment, threats to harm the child, congenital drug addiction and other situations that are not counted as specific categories in NCANDS. The percentages here add up to more than 100 percent because some children were victims of more than one type of maltreatment.

Demographics of Child Victims

Boys and girls are equally likely to suffer maltreatment. In 2005, 47.3 percent of child victims were male, and 50.7 percent were female. Victimization rates were highest among the youngest population of children, birth to 3 years, at a rate of 16.5 per 1,000 children (USDHHS, 2007).

In 2005, 49.7 percent of children who were maltreated were white, 23.1 percent were African American, and 17.4 percent were Hispanic. American Indians and Alaska Natives accounted for 1.2 percent of victims, and Asian-Pacific Islanders accounted for less than 1 percent of victims (USDHHS, 2007).

Approximately 10 percent of the children in this country have a disability or chronic illness. The incidence of abuse and neglect among these children is twice as high as it is among average children (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2006).

Child victims who were reported with disabilities accounted for almost 8 percent of all victims of child abuse and neglect in the 39 states that reported this type of data (USDHHS, 2007). For NCANDS' purposes, children with the following disabilities were considered disabled: mental retardation, emotional disturbances, visual impairment, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, behavioral problems or other medical problems.

It is believed that while children with disabilities are maltreated more frequently, these cases are less likely to be reported for several reasons. Most CPS agencies' data collection on maltreatment cases does not involve questions regarding a child's disability. Children with disabilities are less likely to be believed or viewed as credible when they attempt to report.

Parental Substance Abuse Can Lead to Child Abuse and Neglect

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University estimates in a 2005 report that substance abuse is a factor in at least 70 percent of all reported cases of child maltreatment. Adults with substance use disorders are 2.7 times more likely to report abusive behavior and 4.2 times more likely to report neglectful behavior toward their children. Maltreated children of substance abusing parents are more likely to have poorer physical, intellectual, social and emotional outcomes and are at greater risk of developing substance abuse problems themselves (USDHHS, 2003).

Too Often Children Need to Be Removed From Their Homes

One of the major reasons children enter foster care is abuse and neglect associated with parental alcohol or drug abuse (USDHHS, 1999). As of September 30, 2004, 517,000 children lived in foster homes because they could not safely remain in their own homes. In 2005, one-fifth (21.7 percent) of victims or 317,000 children were removed from their

homes as a result of child maltreatment investigations. Some children spend weeks or months in care, and others live in care for an entire year or longer (USDHHS, 2007).

Statistics Over Time

The number of children who are abused and neglected has fluctuated over time. There has been a general increase in the number of abuse and neglect substantiations.

1999	829,000
2000	881,000
2001	903,000
2002	896,000
2003	906,000
2004	872,000
2005	899,000

It is difficult to determine if the shifts in the numbers of children being reported is due to the actual change in abuse and neglect each year or if the fluctuations are a result of improved data collecting in these areas. NCANDS reports that the increase in 2005's data could be a result of the additional reporting of both Puerto Rico and Alaska, which were not included in *Child Maltreatment* in previous years.

Who Are the Perpetrators?

Perpetrators of child abuse or neglect are most often the child's own parents. According to NCANDS, in 2005, 79.4 percent of perpetrators were parents and 6.8 percent were other relatives. The largest remaining categories of perpetrators were the unmarried partner of a child's parent (3.8 percent) and other perpetrators (4.1 percent). In 3.6 percent of child maltreatment cases the perpetrators were missing or unknown. In under 1 percent of child maltreatment cases the perpetrator was a foster parent, residential facility staff, the child's daycare provider, a legal guardian, friends or neighbors, or other professionals (USDHHS, 2007).

Approximately 40 percent of child victims were maltreated by their mothers who acted alone; another 18.3 percent were maltreated by their fathers acting alone; 17.3 percent were abused by both parents (USDHHS, 2007).

Children Die Every Day From Abuse or Neglect

In 2005, an estimated 1,460 children died as a result of abuse or neglect (USDHHS, 2007). The majority almost 76.6 percent of these children were 3 years of age or younger. Most child fatalities (76.6 percent) happened at the hands of parents (USDHHS, 2007). Not all fatalities were the result of the physical trauma of abuse. Neglect accounted for almost half (32.2 percent) of all fatality cases.

Many Child Victims Are Unknown to CPS Agencies

According to the federally funded Third National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (1996), almost three times as many children are maltreated as are reported to CPS agencies. This study involved 5,700 community professionals who came in contact

with children. The study offered insight into when and why these professionals reported suspected abuse or neglect in greater detail than can be derived through NCANDS data.

What Can You Do?

Thousands of children throughout America suffer abuse and neglect each day. This has harmful consequences on the physical and emotional development and well-being of children. State CPS agencies identify and help many of these children and their families, yet many cases of abuse or neglect are never reported, and not all states provide detailed case-level data to NCANDS. American Humane encourages all community members to become actively involved in the lives of the children within their communities.

American Humane's Front Porch Project® is a national initiative built on the belief that people who are concerned about children's well-being should be empowered to act. The program teaches community members how to intervene appropriately when necessary and encourages them to share their knowledge with other community members. It strengthens communities through relationship building between community members, building on the strengths and assets within at-risk families, and by creating a partnership between participants and government agencies.

You have the power to create positive change in your community by stopping the abuse and neglect that occurs in your own neighborhood. If you suspect child abuse or neglect is occurring, please report it to your local CPS agency or to the police if the child is in immediate danger. The longer the abuse continues the more damage it will ultimately cause the child(ren). (See American Humane's Fact Sheet, *Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect*).

As nationwide data from sources like NCANDS become more detailed and available, they can help professionals and others understand the problem of child maltreatment more completely. Yet, data alone cannot solve the problem of child abuse and neglect in America.

What Is NCANDS?

NCANDS, the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System, is the primary source of national information on abused and neglected children known to public child protective services agencies. American Humane has provided technical assistance to this project since its beginning in 1990. NCANDS reports that *Child Maltreatment 2005* appears to have a large increase in overall data due to the fact that this edition is the first to include Alaska and Puerto Rico. For a copy of this report, contact the Child Welfare Information Gateway at (800) 394-3366 or http://www.childwelfare.gov/. The publication is also available at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb.

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Child Neglect

Child neglect is the most prevalent form of child maltreatment in the United States. According to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), of the approximately 899,000 children in the United States who were victims of abuse and neglect in 2005, 62.8 percent (564,765 children) suffered from neglect alone, including medical neglect (USDHHS, 2007). According to NCANDS, 42.2 percent of child maltreatment fatalities in the United States in 2005 occurred as a result of neglect only, 24.1 percent as a result of physical abuse and neglect, and 27.3 percent as a result of multiple maltreatment types (USDHHS, 2007). In an independent study, Prevent Child Abuse America estimated that 1,291 children in the United States died in 2000 as a result of maltreatment, and that 45 percent of these child maltreatment fatalities were attributable to neglect (Peddle et al., 2002). NCANDS reported an increase of approximately 20,000 victims between 2004 and 2005. This is largely due to the inclusion of data from Alaska and Puerto Rico in the 2005 dataset (USDHHS, 2007).

What Is Neglect?

NCANDS defines neglect as "a type of maltreatment that refers to the failure by the caregiver to provide needed, age-appropriate care although financially able to do so or offered financial or other means to do so" (USDHHS, 2007). Neglect is usually typified by an ongoing pattern of inadequate care and is readily observed by individuals in close contact with the child. Physicians, nurses, day care personnel, relatives and neighbors are frequently the ones to suspect and report neglect in infants, toddlers and preschoolaged children. Once children are in school, school personnel often notice indicators of child neglect such as poor hygiene, poor weight gain, inadequate medical care or frequent absences from school.

Types of Neglect

Professionals define four types of neglect physical, educational, emotional and medical.

Physical neglect

Physical neglect accounts for the majority of cases of maltreatment. Physical neglect generally involves the parent or caregiver not providing the child with basic necessities (e.g., adequate food, clothing and shelter). Failure or refusal to provide these necessities endangers the child's physical health, well-being, psychological growth and development. Physical neglect also includes child abandonment, inadequate supervision, rejection of a child leading to expulsion from the home and failure to adequately provide for the child's safety and physical and emotional needs. Physical neglect can severely impact a child's development by causing failure to thrive; malnutrition; serious illness; physical harm in the form of cuts, bruises, burns or other injuries due to the lack of supervision; and a lifetime of low self-esteem.

Educational neglect

Educational neglect involves the failure of a parent or caregiver to enroll a child of mandatory school age in school or provide appropriate home schooling or needed special educational training, thus allowing the child or youth to engage in chronic truancy. Educational neglect can lead to the child failing to acquire basic life skills, dropping out of school or continually displaying disruptive behavior. Educational neglect can pose a serious threat to the child's emotional well-being, physical health or normal psychological growth and development, particularly when the child has special educational needs that are not met.

Emotional/Psychological neglect

Emotional/Psychological neglect includes actions such as engaging in chronic or extreme spousal abuse in the child's presence, allowing a child to use drugs or alcohol, refusing or failing to provide needed psychological care, constantly belittling the child and withholding affection. Parental behaviors considered to be emotional child maltreatment include:

- Ignoring (consistent failure to respond to the child's need for stimulation, nurturance, encouragement and protection or failure to acknowledge the child's presence);
- Rejecting (actively refusing to respond to the child's needs — e.g., refusing to show affection);
- Verbally assaulting (constant belittling, name calling or threatening);
- Isolating (preventing the child from having normal social contacts with other children and adults);
- Terrorizing (threatening the child with extreme punishment or creating a climate of terror by playing on childhood fears); and
- Corrupting or exploiting (encouraging the child to engage in destructive, illegal or antisocial behavior).

A pattern of this parental behavior can lead to the child's poor self-image, alcohol or drug abuse, destructive behavior and even suicide.

Severe neglect of an infant's need for stimulation and nurturance can result in the infant failing to thrive and even infant death. Emotional neglect is often the most difficult situation to substantiate in a legal context and is often reported secondary to other abuse or neglect concerns.

Medical neglect

Medical neglect is the failure to provide appropriate health care for a child (although financially able to do so), thus placing the child at risk of being seriously disabled or disfigured or dying. According to NCANDS, in 2005, 2 percent of children (17,637 children) in the United States were victims of medical neglect (USDHHS, 2007).

Concern is warranted not only when a parent refuses medical care for a child in an emergency or for an acute illness, but also when a parent ignores medical recommendations for a child with a treatable chronic disease or disability, resulting in frequent hospitalizations or significant deterioration.

Even in non-emergency situations, medical neglect can result in poor overall health and compounded medical problems.

Parents may refuse medical care for their children for different reasons religious beliefs, fear or anxiety about a medical condition or treatment, or financial issues. Child protective services agencies generally will intervene when:

- Medical treatment is needed in an acute emergency (e.g., a child needs a blood transfusion to treat shock);
- A child with a life-threatening chronic disease is not receiving needed medical treatment (e.g., a child with diabetes is not receiving medication); or
- A child has a chronic disease that can cause disability or disfigurement if left untreated (e.g., a child with congenital cataracts needs surgery to prevent blindness).

In these cases, child protection services agencies may seek a court order for medical treatment to save the child's life or prevent life-threatening injury, disability or disfigurement.

Although medical neglect is highly correlated with poverty, there is a distinction between a caregiver's inability to provide the needed care based on cultural norms or the lack of financial resources and a caregiver's knowing reluctance or refusal to provide care. Children and their families may be in need of services even though the parent may not be intentionally neglectful. When poverty limits a parent's resources to adequately provide necessities for the child, services may be offered to help families provide for their children.

What Can You Do?
If you suspect child neglect is occurring, first report it to the local child protective services agency (often called "social services" or "human services") in your county or state.

Professionals who work with children are required by law to report reasonable suspicion of abuse and neglect. Furthermore, in 20 states, citizens who suspect abuse or neglect are required to report it. "Reasonable suspicion" based on objective evidence, which could be firsthand observation or statements made by a parent or child, is all that is needed to report.

What Is NCANDS?
NCANDS, the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System, is the primary source of national information on abused and neglected children known to public child protective services agencies. American Humane has provided technical assistance to this project since its beginning in 1990. NCANDS reports that Child Maltreatment 2005 appears to have a large increase in overall data due to the fact that this edition is the first to include Alaska and Puerto Rico. For a copy of this report, contact the Child Welfare Information Gateway at (800) 394-3366 or http://www.childwelfare.gov/. The publication is also available at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb.

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America's Children: How Are They Doing?

"If our American way of life fails the child, it fails us all." This statement, by author and activist Pearl S. Buck, reminds us that the safety and wellbeing of America's children are crucial to the wellbeing of the entire country. Many of the problems endemic to

American society, such as substance abuse, inadequate educational resources, poverty, homelessness and inadequate health care, increase the risk of family violence and child abuse and neglect. The following statistics reveal some of the significant problems that families face in the United States.

Child Abuse and Neglect Are Everywhere

- In federal fiscal year 2005, an estimated 3.3 million children were allegedly abused or neglected and underwent investigations or assessments by state and local child protective services agencies. Approximately 940,500 children were determined to be victims of child maltreatment (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2007).
- In 2005, an estimated 1,460 children died due to child abuse or neglect. More than 75 percent of children who were killed were younger than 4 years old. More than 40 percent of child fatalities were attributed to neglect. Physical abuse was also a major contributor to child fatalities (USDHHS, 2007).
- While the percentage of injuries to children as a result of shaken baby syndrome is not currently known, the syndrome is recognized as the most common cause of child maltreatment fatalities and long-term disability in infants and young children due to physical abuse (National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome, 2005).
- Every day in America, approximately 2,463 children are determined to be victims of abuse or neglect (USDHHS, 2007).
- As of September 30, 2004, there were 517,000 children in foster care in the United States (USDHHS, AFCARS, 2006).
- The Bureau of Justice Statistics estimates that there are 1.5 million children who have parents incarcerated in state or federal prisons or in jails (Children's Defense Fund, 2005).

Violent Crime Is a Reality for Many of Our Children

- An estimated 3.3 to 10 million children a year are at risk of witnessing domestic violence, which can produce a range of emotional, psychological or behavioral problems for children. Children who are exposed to domestic violence are at a greater risk of being abused or neglected themselves (CDF, 2005).
- In a study of 100 women who were victims of domestic violence, 54 reported that their partner had either hurt or killed the family pets, and 62 percent of this group reported that their children were exposed to their pets' abuse (Ascione, 2000, as cited in Ascione, 2001).
- In just one year (2003), 2,827 children and teens died from gun violence, which is more than the number of fighting American men and women killed in hostile action in Iraq in the three years from 2003 to April 2006 (CDF, 2006).
- From 1979 to 2003, approximately 100,000 children and teens were killed by firearms. Children are twice as likely as adults to be victims of violence and more likely to be killed by adults than by other children (CDF, 2005).
- Each day in America, 181 children are arrested for violent crimes (CDF, 2006).

- Girls are the fastest growing segment of the juvenile justice population. The arrest rate for females under age 18 increased more than 14 percent between 1993 and 2002, while the arrest rate for males under age 18 decreased (CDF, 2004).
- There are at least 2,225 child offenders in the United States sentenced to spend the rest of their lives in prison (Human Rights Watch, 2006).

A Lack of Adequate Health Care Affects Children's Well-Being

- In 2002, 314,077 infants born in the United States were of low birth weight (less than 5.5 pounds). Low birth weight babies have a high probability of experiencing developmental problems (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2005).
-
- Although early prenatal care has increased significantly over the past five years, 17.3 percent of babies born in 2002 were to mothers who did not receive prenatal care (CDF, 2004).
-
- In 2002, 27,500 babies in the United Stated died before their first birthday (CDF, 2004).
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- Progress is being made to immunize all children against vaccine-preventable diseases, but only about 77.5 percent of two-year-olds were fully immunized in 2002 (CDF, 2004).
-
- In 2002, approximately 9.3 million children in this country had no health insurance. This figure would be even higher if not for the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), which insures 5.8 million children who do not have health insurance and do not qualify for Medicaid (CDF, 2004).
-
- In 2002, the rate of births to girls aged 15 to 19 was 43 per 1,000. This rate has decreased steadily since 1991 (CDF, 2004).

Children's Educational Services Are Also Falling Short

- In 2004, just one in seven of the 15 million children eligible for federal child care assistance actually received it. More than 3 million children eligible for Head Start and Early Head Start were not served (CDF, 2005).
-
- The majority of fourth graders cannot read or do math at their grade level (CDF, 2005).
-
- For persons 25 years of age and older, over 27.5 million have not graduated high school (Hoffman, Snyder and Tan, 2005).

Poverty and Homelessness are Pervasive Problems Among America's Children

- Poverty is the single best predictor of child abuse and neglect. Children who live in families with an annual income less than $15,000 are 22 times more likely to be abused or neglected than children living in families with an annual income of

$30,000 or more. Abused and neglected children are 1.5 to 6 times as likely to be delinquent and 1.25 to 3 times as likely to be arrested as an adult (CDF, 2005).

- After falling for seven consecutive years during the 1990s, the number of children living in poverty rose for four years in a row to 13 million in 2004; in all, 37 million Americans live below the poverty line. Child poverty has increased by over 1.4 million children since 2000, accounting for more than a quarter of the 5.4 million people overall who have fallen into poverty. More than one out of every six American children were poor in 2004 (CDF, 2005).
- For every five children who have fallen into poverty since 2000, more than three fell into "extreme poverty," a term describing families living at less than one-half of the poverty level. This means that these families had to get by on less than $7,412 a year, or $20 a day (CDF, 2005).
- In 2004, 13.9 million children under age 18 (19 percent of all children) lived in "food-insecure" households (CHP, 2004).
- Children make up nearly 40 percent of all emergency food clients (CHP, 2004).
- Families are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population, now accounting for 40 percent of the nation's homeless (CDF, 2005).

Runaways or "Thrownaways" Are Often Victims of Abuse or Neglect

- According to a 1999 study, as many as 1,680,900 children had a runaway or thrownaway episode. Of these, an estimated 37 percent were "caretaker missing" youth, meaning the caregiver was alarmed, did not know the whereabouts of the child and attempted to find the child (Hammer, Finkelhor, & Sedlak, 2002).
- This study also found that only an estimated 21 percent of all runaways or thrownaways were reported missing to police or to a missing children's agency for purposes of locating them (Hammer, Finkelhor, & Sedlak, 2002).

What Does This Mean?

From these statistics, it is evident that we are facing significant challenges in improving the well-being of our nation's children. We must determine how to provide support to families so that each child has the basic necessities of life, including food, shelter and education, and ensure that each child has the opportunity to thrive. These statistics show the issues families face every day and challenge us to address these issues if we are to improve the safety and wellbeing of our nation's children and their families. Through advocacy, volunteering, outreach and education, one person can make a difference in the life of a child. Our children are our future!

What Is NCANDS?

NCANDS, the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System, is the primary source of national information on abused and neglected children known to public child protective

services agencies. American Humane has provided technical assistance to this project since its beginning in 1990. NCANDS reports that *Child Maltreatment 2005* appears to have a large increase in overall data due to the fact that this edition is the first to include Alaska and Puerto Rico. For a copy of this report, contact the Child Welfare Information Gateway at (800) 394-3366 or http://www.childwelfare.gov/. The publication is also available at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb.

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Bullying Prevention and Intervention

What is bullying?
"Bullying is an act of repeated aggressive behavior in order to intentionally hurt another person, physically or mentally. Bullying is characterized by an individual behaving in a certain way to gain power over another person." (Ducharme, 2010).
Bullying can take many forms. It can include:

- Physical violence
- Intimidation and threats
- Name calling and belittling
- Social exclusion (i.e., leaving someone out of social gatherings and activities)
- Gossiping and spreading rumors about others
- Public humiliation
- Using slurs, words or phrases that characterize a bullied victim's identity to suggest that something is unacceptable or worthless (e.g., using the word "gay" when what is meant is "un-cool")

Who gets bullied?
It is estimated that nearly 30% of students are involved in bullying, as victims, perpetrators or both. Studies have found that 15 to 25% of children and youth in the U.S. are bullied and 15 to 20% bully others.

Children and youth who are overweight, gay (or perceived to be gay) or have disabilities are up to 63% more likely to be bullied than are other children.

What are warning signs that my child is being bullied?
Your child might be experiencing bullying if he or she:

- Has unexplained cuts, bruises, scratches and/or missing or torn pieces of clothing.
- Seems afraid to go to school or other social activities.
- Spends no time with friends or seems to have very few friends.
- Has lost interest in school work or suddenly begins to do poorly in school.
- Appears sad, moody, teary or depressed when he or she comes home from school or other activities.
- Complains of chronic pains such as headaches or stomachaches.
- Suddenly experiences a change in sleeping patterns (either too much or not enough sleep) or has frequent bad dreams.
- Experiences a change of appetite or eating patterns.
- Appears anxious and suffers from low self-esteem.

If your child is being bullied, he or she may display one, all or even none of these warning signs. So be alert for any changes in your child's behavior and talk to him or her frequently about what is going on at school and in other activities.

Why do kids bully?
Some reasons kids bully:

- Previous traumatic experiences of their own, including maltreatment or bullying.
- A lack of warmth and involvement on the part of their parents.

- Parent(s) exhibiting bullying behavior or violence to others, including to both people and animals.
- Harsh, physical discipline at home, including physical abuse.
- A lack of supervision or intervention (including little to no limits for children's behavior) by parents, guardians, teachers and other adults.
- Victimization by older siblings.
- Friends who bully or who have positive attitudes about violence.
- Models of bullying behavior are prevalent throughout society, especially in television, movies and video games.
- Some aggressive children who take on high status roles may use bullying as a way to enhance their social power and protect their prestige with peers.
- Some children with low social status may use bullying as a way to deflect taunting and aggression that is directed toward them and enhance their social status with higher status peers.
- Bullying thrives in schools where faculty and staff do not address bullying, where there are weak policies against bullying and discrimination, and where there is little supervision of students — especially at recess or during free periods.

What is at risk when children are bullied?
Children and adolescents who are subjected to bullying are at risk of experiencing damage to their physical safety and well-being, mental health and development, self-esteem, and educational success. Often, bullied students will skip school or drop out due to their fear of humiliation and violence. Constant ridicule and torment can also have lasting effects on youth's sense of who they are in the world, and how they identify themselves as they develop. In addition, children who are bullied may go on to harm others, which could potentially have lasting negative impacts on individuals and communities. Sadly, children and youth who are bullied sometimes turn to suicide to escape the anguish they feel. *In short, we simply cannot allow children and youth to be bullied to death.*

What should I do if my child is being bullied?
Children who are being bullied may feel embarrassed or afraid to let adults know about the situation, especially if they feel adults will judge them or fail to protect them. If your child tells you that he or she is being bullied, be understanding and supportive, because it can take a lot of courage to admit it. Ask your child what he or she thinks can be done to help the situation, and make suggestions yourself. It is important not to ignore the situation or pretend it is not happening. Rational decisions about next steps and ways to end the bullying need to be made as soon as possible.

If your child is being bullied at school, the best strategy is to contact the school and share your concerns about bullying with them. Ask about what types of programs, policies or culture changes are in place to counteract bullying, and insist that protective measures be in place. No one can stop bullying alone — it takes a group effort from teachers, school administrators, community members, parents/guardians, extended family members and kids/youth. Here are some additional action steps you can take if your child is being bullied:

- Assess how the bullying is impacting your child, and seek therapeutic or emergency help if necessary.
- Communicate to your child that he or she is not to blame and that you love your child for who he or she is. If you are struggling with why your child is being bullied (e.g., issues surrounding sexual orientation), seek support and advice for yourself, so that you can be there for your child.
- Be an advocate for your child by ensuring that adults at his or her school or other out-of-the-house activities are aware of the harassment and are taking every necessary step to end it.
- Talk with your child about the steps to take to protect himself or herself, both emotionally and physically.
- Encourage your child to take part in extracurricular activities that highlight his or her strengths and that make your child feel safe, special and accepted.
- Seek out positive adult mentors (e.g., extended family members, teachers, coaches, volunteers, etc.) who your child can relate to.
- Get involved at your child's school and other activities, and encourage the implementation of policies and programs that denounce prejudice and celebrate diversity.

You can also give your child, or other young people who you know are being bullied, the following advice:

- Understand that you are not to blame for the bullying and that you deserve to be treated with kindness and respect.
- Stand up for yourself but do not overly engage with the bully; focus your energy on taking caring of yourself.
- Speak out. Tell someone you trust that you are being harmed and that you need help. If you can, file an official complaint with your school.
- Encourage others (like fellow students, friends, relatives and community members) who have been bullied or who have witnessed bullying to raise their voices with you. It won't stop unless everyone says no.
- Spend your time doing things you care about, either alone or with people you love.
- If you are feeling hopeless or suicidal, know that you are not alone and that there is hope. Let someone you trust know how you are feeling, or call an anonymous hotline for help:
  1.800.SUICIDE (1.800.784.2433)
  1.800.273.TALK (1.800.273.8255)
  1.888.628.9454 – Red Nacional de Prevencion del Suicidio
  1.800.799.4TTY (1.800.799.4889) – hotline for the hearing and speech impaired
  1.866.4-U-TREVOR (1.866.488.7386) – The Trevor Project Lifeline, focused on crisis and suicide prevention efforts for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth

If your child or another youth tells you that a friend of his or hers is being bullied, you can offer the following advice:

- Speak out against the bullying when it happens and after the fact. Model kindness and respect for your peers every chance you get.

- Tell an adult what you have witnessed and encourage other children/youth to raise their voices, too. If you can, file an official complaint with your school. It won't stop unless everyone says no.
- Be there for your bullied peer/classmate and show others that you support him or her.

What should I do if my child is bullying others?

If you discover that your child is bullying others, here are some things you can do:

- Remember that children who bully others do so because they might also have been a victim of some type of bullying or other trauma in the past. Talking with your child about why he or she is bullying is an important part of stopping the behavior.
- Make it clear that you will not tolerate bullying or violence of any kind. Enforce this rule and other household rules with non-physical discipline, and reward good behavior with praise.
- Model kindness, empathy and respect for all living things, including people, animals and the natural environment.
- Point out and discuss with your children when you witness inequality, cruelty or discrimination, and communicate that these are all unacceptable.
- Spend more time with your child and learn about his or her activities and friends.
- Make sure adults in your child's school and/or extracurricular groups outside the home know that you are committed to ending the bullying, and get them on board to help you.
- As a family, work with your child on how he or she can begin to repair the harm caused to those he or she has bullied, as well as to the victim's family and the community (if applicable).
- Encourage your child to get involved in activities like social clubs, music groups, sports and/or volunteering, so that he or she has the opportunity to learn the value of compassionately giving back to those less fortunate.
- Think about seeking professional help from a counselor or therapist if the bullying does not stop or is hard to control.

What can schools and communities do to prevent and address bullying?

- Model kindness, empathy and respect for all living things, including people, animals and the natural environment.
- Implement solid school and/or social policies that explicitly specify that bullying on the basis of race, ethnicity, language, gender, class, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and appearance (including weight) will not be tolerated.
- If not already present, advocate for a process in schools by which youth can file an official complaint if they witness or experience bullying. Apply real consequences and accountability for youth who receive a complaint, including opportunities for them to repair the harm they have caused.
- Hold every adult accountable to stop bullying in the school and community.
    - Require that adults working with youth attend trainings in cultural competency and bullying prevention and intervention, making it clear they

    - are expected to consistently respond whenever they witness an act of bullying.
    - Make bullying reduction a key component of every staff member's annual performance review by tracking bullying incidents (and other data) at your school.
- Make efforts to address all types of bullying (e.g., cyber bullying).
- Work in partnership with families and community groups to address the needs of youth involved in bullying so that harm may be repaired.
- Support the development of student groups and programs in schools that promote cultural diversity, inclusiveness, respect and equality (e.g., gay-straight alliances).
- Encourage teachers and other mentors to include culturally diverse people and subjects in their lesson plans or activities. Provide ways for all youth to see themselves and their peers in the curricula they receive.
- Consider incorporating humane education lessons and activities that instill kindness and respect for all living beings. Research indicates that humane education resources, like those produced by American Humane Association, can help foster empathy and compassion in young people.
- Provide resources for victims and offenders to receive help or support, such as counseling.

Kindness is contagious.

Bullying can be extremely harmful to children and youth, including threatening their physical, social and mental well-being; healthy development; and feelings of self-worth. In extreme cases of bullying, the victim may choose to end his or her life to stop the bullying. But there are steps that parents, families and communities can take to prevent bullying from occurring. *The bottom line is that parents, guardians and other caring adults can have a great impact on their children and how they treat others.* As a parent, it's important that you instill values of kindness, compassion and empathy into your children at the earliest stage possible. Below are some tips that will help you teach your children to be kind to others from a young age.

- Lead by example. Your children will learn to be kind to others by the way you act and speak to and about other people.
- Ask your children how it feels when someone does something kind for them when they're having a bad day.
- Praise your children when you notice them doing something kind for you, a sibling, a friend or a neighbor, and when they are kind to animals and pets.
- When someone does something kind for you, tell your children about it and explain to them how it made you feel. Compliment the other person in front of your children for his or her kindness.
- Consistently speak out in opposition against hatred, cruelty and prejudice toward others.
- Make sure that those in power know that you are passionate about this issue. Contact your local school board or legislator and advocate for inclusive and clear-cut anti-bullying and non-discrimination policies in your community and your local schools.

- Give back. Donate or volunteer your time with your children for a cause that you, your family and/or your children care deeply about. Demonstrate the golden rule in action and lend a helping hand to those in need.

Even if you don't notice it, children pick up on everything you do, from a very young age. Demonstrate kindness whenever your children are around, and raise objections in front of them when you witness inequality, cruelty or discrimination of any kind. Early and ongoing discussions about the importance of treating all living beings with kindness, fairness and humanity, regardless of differences, will be hugely impactful for your children. Trust us, they're listening.

For specific tips and materials (including downloadable lesson plans) from American Humane Association's Humane Education resources, please visit www.americanhumane.org/humaneeducation.

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APPENDIX F

SIGNS, SYMPTOMS AND EFFECTS

Sexual abuse

Children who are sexually abused may:

Stay away from certain people

- they might avoid being alone with people, such as family members or friends
- they could seem frightened of a person or reluctant to socialize with them.
-

Show sexual behavior that's inappropriate for their age

- a child might become sexually active at a young age
- they might be promiscuous
- they could use sexual language or know information that you wouldn't expect them to.

Have physical symptoms

- anal or vaginal soreness
- an unusual discharge
- sexually transmitted infection (STI)
  pregnancy.

How do you define child sexual abuse

There are 2 different types of child sexual abuse. These are called contact abuse and non-contact abuse.

Contact abuse involves touching activities where an abuser makes physical contact with a child, including penetration. It includes:

- sexual touching of any part of the body whether the child's wearing clothes or not
- rape or penetration by putting an object or body part inside a child's mouth, vagina or anus
- forcing or encouraging a child to take part in sexual activity
- making a child take their clothes off, touch someone else's genitals or masturbate.
-

Non-contact abuse involves non-touching activities, such as grooming, exploitation, persuading children to perform sexual acts over the internet and flashing. It includes:

- encouraging a child to watch or hear sexual acts
- not taking proper measures to prevent a child being exposed to sexual activities by others
- meeting a child following sexual grooming with the intent of abusing them
- online abuse including making, viewing or distributing child abuse images
- allowing someone else to make, view or distribute child abuse images
- showing pornography to a child outward nudity
  sexually exploiting a child for money, power or status (child exploitation).

Talk **PANTS** and you've got it covered…

PANTS is a really easy way for you to explain how to avoid abuse….

- Privates are private
- Always remember your body belongs to you
- No means no
- Talk about secrets that upset you

  Speak up, someone can help

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/physical-abuse/

Emotional Abuse

There often aren't any obvious physical symptoms of emotional abuse or neglect but you may spot signs in a child's actions or emotions. Changes in emotions are a normal part of growing up, so it can be really difficult to tell if a child is being emotionally abused. Babies and pre-school children who are being emotionally abused or neglected may:

- be overly-affectionate towards strangers or people they haven't known for very long
- lack confidence or become wary or anxious
- not appear to have a close relationship with their parent, e.g. when being taken to or collected from nursery etc.
- be aggressive or nasty towards other children and animals.
-

Older children may:

- use language, act in a way or know about things that you wouldn't expect them to know for their age
- struggle to control strong emotions or have extreme outbursts
- seem isolated from their parents
- lack social skills or have few, if any, friends.

What Is Emotional Abuse?

Emotional abuse of a child is commonly defined as a pattern of behavior by parents or caregivers that can seriously interfere with a child's cognitive, emotional, psychological or social development. Emotional abuse of a child — also referred to as psychological maltreatment — can include:

- **Ignoring**. Either physically or psychologically, the parent or caregiver is not present to respond to the child. He or she may not look at the child and may not call the child by name.
- **Rejecting**. This is an active refusal to respond to a child's needs (e.g., refusing to touch a child, denying the needs of a child, ridiculing a child).

- **Isolating**. The parent or caregiver consistently prevents the child from having normal social interactions with peers, family members and adults. This also may include confining the child or limiting the child's freedom of movement.
- **Exploiting or corrupting**. In this kind of abuse, a child is taught, encouraged or forced to develop inappropriate or illegal behaviors. It may involve self-destructive or antisocial acts of the parent or caregiver, such as teaching a child how to steal or forcing a child into prostitution.
- **Verbally assaulting**. This involves constantly belittling, shaming, ridiculing or verbally threatening the child.
- **Terrorizing**. Here, the parent or caregiver threatens or bullies the child and creates a climate of fear for the child. Terrorizing can include placing the child or the child's loved one (such as a sibling, pet or toy) in a dangerous or chaotic situation, or placing rigid or unrealistic expectations on the child with threats of harm if they are not met.
- **Neglecting the child**. This abuse may include educational neglect, where a parent or caregiver fails or refuses to provide the child with necessary educational services; mental health neglect, where the parent or caregiver denies or ignores a child's need for treatment for psychological problems; or medical neglect, where a parent or caregiver denies or ignores a child's need for treatment for medical problems.

While the definition of emotional abuse is often complex and imprecise, professionals agree that, for most parents, occasional negative attitudes or actions are not considered emotional abuse. Even the best of parents have occasions when they have momentarily "lost control" and said hurtful things to their children, failed to give them the attention they wanted or unintentionally scared them.

What is truly harmful, according to James Garbarino, a national expert on emotional abuse, is the persistent, chronic pattern that "erodes and corrodes a child" (1994). Many experts concur that emotional abuse is typically not an isolated incident.

Why Does It Happen?

Emotional abuse can, and does, happen in all types of families, regardless of their background. Most parents want the best for their children. However, some parents may emotionally and psychologically harm their children because of stress, poor parenting skills, social isolation, lack of available resources or inappropriate expectations of their children. They may emotionally abuse their children because the parents or caregivers were emotionally abused themselves as children.

What Are the Effects of Emotional Abuse?

Douglas Besharov states in *Recognizing Child Abuse: A Guide for the Concerned*, "Emotional abuse is an assault on the child's psyche, just as physical abuse is an assault on the child's body"(1990). Children who are constantly ignored, shamed, terrorized or humiliated suffer at least as much, if not more, than if they are physically assaulted. Danya Glaser (2002) finds that emotional abuse can be "more strongly predictive of subsequent impairments in the children's development than the severity of physical abuse."

An infant who is severely deprived of basic emotional nurturance, even though physically well cared for, can fail to thrive and can eventually die. Babies with less severe emotional deprivation can grow into anxious and insecure children who are slow to develop and who have low self-esteem.

Although the visible signs of emotional abuse in children can be difficult to detect, the hidden scars of this type of abuse manifest in numerous behavioral ways, including insecurity, poor self-esteem, destructive behavior, angry acts (such as fire setting and animal cruelty), withdrawal, poor development of basic skills, alcohol or drug abuse, suicide, difficulty forming relationships and unstable job histories.
Emotionally abused children often grow up thinking that they are deficient in some way. A continuing tragedy of emotional abuse is that, when these children become parents, they may continue the cycle with their own children.

Identifying and Preventing Emotional Abuse
Some children may experience emotional abuse only, without ever experiencing another form of abuse. However, emotional abuse typically is associated with and results from other types of abuse and neglect, which makes it a significant risk factor in all child abuse and neglect cases. Brassard, Germain, and Hart (1987, as cited in Pecora et al., 2000) assert that emotional abuse is "inherent in all forms of child maltreatment."
Emotional abuse that exists independently of other forms of abuse is the most difficult form of child abuse to identify and stop. This is because child protective services must have demonstrable evidence that harm to a child has been done before they can intervene. And, since emotional abuse doesn't result in physical evidence such as bruising or malnutrition, it can be very hard to diagnose.
Researchers have developed diagnostic tools to help professionals who work with children and families identify and treat emotional abuse. Professionals are taught to identify risk factors for emotional abuse, ask appropriate questions about a family's history and the family's present behaviors, and provide appropriate resources (such as financial resources, mental health services or parenting classes) to help parents and caregivers create safe, stable environments for their children and themselves.

What You Can Do
All children need acceptance, love, encouragement, discipline, consistency, stability and positive attention. What can you do when you feel your behavior toward your child is not embodying these qualities but is bordering on emotional abuse? Here are some suggestions:

- Never be afraid to apologize to your child. If you lose your temper and say something in anger that wasn't meant to be said, apologize. Children need to know that adults can admit when they are wrong.
- Don't call your child names or attach labels to your child. Names such as "Stupid" or "Lazy," or phrases like "good for nothing," "You'll never amount to anything," "If you could only be more like your brother," and "You can never do anything right" tear at a child's self-esteem. A child deserves respect.
- Address the behavior that needs correcting and use appropriate discipline techniques, such as time outs or natural consequences. Be sure to discuss the child's behavior

and the reason for the discipline, both before and immediately after you discipline. Discipline should be provided to correct your child's behavior, rather than to punish or humiliate him or her.

- Compliment your child when he or she accomplishes even a small task, or when you see good behavior.
- Walk away from a situation when you feel you are losing control. Isolate yourself in another room for a few minutes (after first making sure the child is safe), count to 10 before you say anything, ask for help from another adult or take a few deep breaths before reacting.
- Get help. Support is available for families at risk of emotional abuse through local child protection services agencies, community centers, churches, physicians, mental health facilities and schools.

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Physical Neglect

Physical Neglect can have serious and long-lasting effects. It can be anything from leaving a child home alone to the very worst cases where a child dies from malnutrition or being denied the care they need. In some cases it can cause permanent disabilities. Neglect can be really difficult to identify, making it hard for professionals to take early action to protect a child.

Having one of the signs or symptoms below doesn't necessarily mean that a child is being neglected. But if you notice multiple, or persistent, signs then it could indicate there's a serious problem.

Children who are neglected may have:

Poor appearance and hygiene
They may:

- be smelly or dirty
- have unwashed clothes
- have inadequate clothing, e.g. not having a winter coat
- seem hungry or turn up to school without having breakfast or any lunch money
- have frequent and untreated diaper rash in infants.

They may have:

- untreated injuries, medical and dental issues
- repeated accidental injuries caused by lack of supervision
- recurring illnesses or infections
- not been given appropriate medicines
- missed medical appointments such as vaccinations
- poor muscle tone or prominent joints
- skin sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies or ringworm
- thin or swollen tummy
- anaemia
- tiredness
- faltering weight or growth and not reaching developmental milestones (known as failure to thrive)
- poor language, communication or social skills.

They may be:

- living in an unsuitable home environment for example dog mess being left or not having any heating
- left alone for a long time
- taking on the role of care taker for other family members.

Things you may notice
If you're worried that a child is being abused, watch out for any unusual behaviour. withdrawn suddenly behaves differently anxious clingy depressed aggressive problems sleeping eating disorders wets the bed soils clothes takes risks misses school changes in eating habits obsessive behavior nightmares drugs alcohol self-harm thoughts about suicide

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is deliberately hurting a child causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts. It isn't accidental - children who are physically abused suffer violence such as being hit, kicked, poisoned, burned, slapped or having objects thrown at them. Shaking or hitting babies can cause non-accidental head injuries. Sometimes parents or caretakers will make up or cause the symptoms of illness in their child, perhaps giving them medicine they don't need and making the child sick – aka as fabricated or induced illness.

There's no excuse for physically abusing a child. It causes serious, and often long-lasting, harm – and in severe cases, death.

Physical symptoms

Bruises

- commonly on the head but also on the ear or neck or soft areas - the abdomen, back and buttocks
- defensive wounds commonly on the forearm, upper arm, back of the leg, hands or feet
- clusters of bruises on the upper arm, outside of the thigh or on the body
- bruises with dots of blood under the skin
- a bruised scalp and swollen eyes from hair being pulled violently
- bruises in the shape of a hand or object.

Bite marks

- usually oval or circular in shape
  visible wounds, indentations or bruising from individual teeth.

Burns or scalds

- can be from hot liquids, hot objects, flames, chemicals or electricity
- on the hands, back, shoulders or buttocks; scalds may be on lower limbs, both arms and/or both legs
- a clear edge to the burn or scald
- sometimes in the shape or an implement for example, a circular cigarette burn
  multiple burns or scalds.

Fractures or broken bones

fractures to the ribs or the leg bones in babies
multiple fractures or breaks at different stages of healing

Other injuries and health problems

scarring
effects of poisoning such as vomiting, drowsiness or seizures
respiratory problems from drowning, suffocation or poisoning

Things you may notice

If you're worried that a child is being abused, watch out for any unusual behavior. withdrawn suddenly, behaves differently, anxious clingy, depressed, aggressive problems, sleeping, eating disorders, wets the bed, soils clothes, takes risks, misses school, changes in eating habits, obsessive behavior, nightmares, drugs, alcohol, self-harm, thoughts about suicide.

Medical neglect

Medical neglect is the failure to provide appropriate health care for a child (although financially able to do so), thus placing the child at risk of being seriously disabled or disfigured or dying. According to NCANDS, in 2005, 2 percent of children (17,637 children) in the United States were victims of medical neglect (USDHHS, 2007). Concern is warranted not only when a parent refuses medical care for a child in an emergency or for an acute illness, but also when a parent ignores medical

recommendations for a child with a treatable chronic disease or disability, resulting in frequent hospitalizations or significant deterioration.
Even in non-emergency situations, medical neglect can result in poor overall health and compounded medical problems.

Parents may refuse medical care for their children for different reasons religious beliefs, fear or anxiety about a medical condition or treatment, or financial issues. Child protective services agencies generally will intervene when:

- Medical treatment is needed in an acute emergency (e.g., a child needs a blood transfusion to treat shock);
- A child with a life-threatening chronic disease is not receiving needed medical treatment (e.g., a child with diabetes is not receiving medication); or
- A child has a chronic disease that can cause disability or disfigurement if left untreated (e.g., a child with congenital cataracts needs surgery to prevent blindness).

In these cases, child protection services agencies may seek a court order for medical treatment to save the child's life or prevent life-threatening injury, disability or disfigurement.

Although medical neglect is highly correlated with poverty, there is a distinction between a caregiver's inability to provide the needed care based on cultural norms or the lack of financial resources and a caregiver's knowing reluctance or refusal to provide care. Children and their families may be in need of services even though the parent may not be intentionally neglectful. When poverty limits a parent's resources to adequately provide necessities for the child, services may be offered to help families provide for their children.

Educational neglect

Educational neglect involves the failure of a parent or caregiver to enroll a child of mandatory school age in school or provide appropriate home schooling or needed special educational training, thus allowing the child or youth to engage in chronic truancy. Educational neglect can lead to the child failing to acquire basic life skills, dropping out of school or continually displaying disruptive behavior. Educational neglect can pose a serious threat to the child's emotional well-being, physical health or normal psychological growth and development, particularly when the child has special educational needs that are not met.

Emotional/Psychological neglect

Emotional/Psychological neglect includes actions such as engaging in chronic or extreme spousal abuse in the child's presence, allowing a child to use drugs or alcohol, refusing or failing to provide needed psychological care, constantly belittling the child and withholding affection. Parental behaviors considered to be emotional child maltreatment include:

- Ignoring (consistent failure to respond to the child's need for stimulation, nurturance, encouragement and protection or failure to acknowledge the child's presence);
- Rejecting (actively refusing to respond to the child's needs — e.g., refusing to show affection);
- Verbally assaulting (constant belittling, name calling or threatening);
- Isolating (preventing the child from having normal social contacts with other children and adults);
- Terrorizing (threatening the child with extreme punishment or creating a climate of terror by playing on childhood fears); and
- Corrupting or exploiting (encouraging the child to engage in destructive, illegal or antisocial behavior).

A pattern of this parental behavior can lead to the child's poor self-image, alcohol or drug abuse, destructive behavior and even suicide.

Severe neglect of an infant's need for stimulation and nurturance can result in the infant failing to thrive and even infant death. Emotional neglect is often the most difficult situation to substantiate in a legal context and is often reported secondary to other abuse or neglect concerns.

For a copy of this report, contact the Child Welfare Information Gateway at (800) 394-3366 or http://www.childwelfare.gov/. The publication is also available at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb.

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